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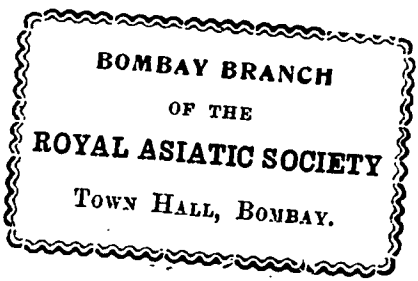

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PROFESSOR SMYTH'S

LECTURES ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

VOL. III

LECTURES ON HISTORY

SECOND AND CONCLUDING SERIES

ON

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

BY WILLIAM SMYTH

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UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

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LECTURES ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

LECTURE XXXIV.

BURKE A POLITICAL AND MORAL PROPHET.

THE new opinions must be now considered as having entirely prevailed; the execution of the king was the consummation of their triumph. Scarcely a trace of the old opinions remained: not only was the monarch violently cast out of the political system, but the nobility, the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the feudal notions, were banished or proscribed; the principles of government, the interior organization of the kingdom, the magistracy, every thing connected with the constitution of the state, was altered. In the speeches of the different members of the Convention we see no appeal made but to the sovereignty of the people; *their* will, if it can but be ascertained, is supposed to be a sufficient sanction and rule: the whole system is now that of a republic, a republic of the most unqualified nature. And this, then, is the result to which this great kingdom has been at last conducted by the progress of the new opinions. But no such result as this was ever in the contemplation of wise and good men when they first wished success to the Revolution in France—little that they had promised themselves had taken place; on the contrary, every thing that they would have deprecated; and on the whole, the Revolution, now arrived at the end of its first stage, must be considered as having entirely failed. What were hereafter to be the consequences, and what benefit may have already accrued to France, even as she now stands,

is not the question; it may be considerable, it may be permanent. In human affairs there is no change without some attendant advantages: a conflagration may destroy a city, and there will then be an opportunity afforded of making streets more spacious, and houses of a better construction. But the question is, whether on the execution of the king and the erection of the republic, in the situation that France stood at the close of January, 1793, the Revolution must not be considered as having failed; and whether the whole had not then become, and must for ever remain, an example and warning to mankind, of the different faults that may be committed by those who defend old opinions, and by those who assert new; by those who administer a government, and by those who would reform it; by the older part of a community, and by the more youthful; by those who are but too full of selfishness and prejudice on the one side, and those who are full of generous hope and inconsiderate folly on the other. Into great divisions of this kind may mankind always be thrown; and this French Revolution, in the different lessons that it holds out, may always be applied, in its main principles, to every case that can possibly arise. These different lessons I have from time to time, as I proceeded, endeavoured to impress upon your consideration. There are those who may differ from me in my views of the different parties concerned, but their disagreement with me will chiefly consist in the different proportions of blame to be imputed to each party in its turn. I have kept the faults of each, as I hope, sufficiently within your observation. I know not that either party has any great reason to triumph on account of the superior propriety and virtue of its behaviour; each having, in truth, submitted to the temptations of its situation. Still there are degrees, the faults being more gross and repulsive and destructive and savage and terrific in the one instance than in the other; and not only on this account have I dwelt more anxiously and minutely on the faults of the popular party, from time to time, but because the faults of patriots are more important, as I have often suggested to you; and again, because their faults are, for some time, less discernible; for while they seem improving the institutions of their country, and their intentions are good, it is not always easy to see that

they are going too far; and above all, as I must repeat, because the consequences of their faults may be of a nature so very tremendous; lastly, because the promoters of reform, the assertors of new opinions, the makers of revolutions, are always men rising into life, as yet young, and from the changing state of their minds and opinions *more* (though far from sufficiently so), yet *more* within the reach of argument and remonstrance, of example and instruction, of the lessons of history, than are the rulers of mankind; a description of men who are older, and are become inveterate in particular trains of thought and feeling; who do not readily condescend to lessons of any kind; and who, on whatever account, are never found, in similar situations, at all wiser than those who have gone before them, but are incurably selfish and most unwisely obstinate in the maintenance of abuses and oppression, inconvenient laws and impolitic systems. On these accounts, and because I think civil liberty the greatest earthly blessing that a nation can enjoy, and bringing every other blessing in its train, I have dwelt, as I have often observed to you, with a minuteness that may have been tedious, and may have appeared unnecessary, and even unfriendly, on the mistakes and unreasonableness of the more early popular party in this Revolution, and with an indignation and horror which were surely but natural on the frightful excesses and appalling crimes of those who followed them: and the observations I am now making, I repeat again and again, that I may not be misapprehended; that I may not be supposed indifferent to the cause of the liberties of mankind, or insensible to the merits of those who assert them, because I note the faults that were by such men committed in the French Revolution, and warn all such men of the temptations of their nature. It is possible that the lessons of history, both on the one side and the other, may be thrown away, and have little or no effect on those who are to follow us; still they are in this Revolution to be found, and it is my duty, and the duty I conceive of every commentator on the past, to hold them up in the most distinct light he can, that every chance may be taken of the avoidance of such fatal mistakes in future.

With regard to the popular actors in the scene, they were not without their admonitions and their warnings, as I have

from time to time observed to you. Distinguished members in the Constituent Assembly protested loudly, and argued ably against the course that the patriots were pursuing; but they were considered as speaking from interested motives, or drawn aside by the prejudices of their situation; and it was difficult, it was totally impossible, amidst the enthusiasm and clamour of the high minded and the young, not to say the more enlightened and informed, for men of graver wisdom and of more cautious temperament to obtain a hearing. Such men, however, did exist, and did come forward; and it would be a mistake, and a very unfortunate mistake, to suppose otherwise. This is, however, one of the main lessons of the Revolution; and it must be enforced, and it must be borne away by those who read the history.

The same sort of instruction was exhibited to mankind not only by distinguished men in the Constituent Assembly, but by the great political writer of our own country, by Mr. Burke. I have already noticed this circumstance to you. Mr. Burke's writings are quite a part of this great subject of the French Revolution. I have already mentioned to you, that I should think it no mean praise if I could but assist you in appreciating their value; if I could but enable you to separate their profound philosophy, their real wisdom, from their occasional violence and fury.

Burke was a man who, from the ardour of his temperament and the vehemence of his eloquence, might be almost said to have ruined every cause and every party that he espoused: no mind, however great, that will not bow to the superiority of his genius, his talents for acquiring knowledge, his fine imagination, and the comprehensiveness of his understanding; yet no mind, however inferior, that will not occasionally feel itself entitled to look down upon him, from the total want, which he sometimes shows, of all calmness and candour, and even, at particular moments, all reasonableness and propriety of thought. I shall in this lecture quote largely from him, very largely, that I may secure in you some immediate acquaintance with his works. I shall quote from his Reflections, the best of his writings on the French Revolution; to those publications that followed, if I refer, it must be hereafter. He at length became so violent a counter-revolutionist,

and in his speeches and pamphlets so furious, that he lost his respect in the eyes of his opponents.

To allude now to his first great work, his Reflections. It is quite remarkable at what an early period the danger of the new opinions was stated by this philosophic statesman; here lies what, I think, must be considered as the great merit of his immortal production, his "Reflections on the Revolution of France." His work was an assertion of the old opinions, in opposition to the new, long before the nature of the new opinions had been duly, or even at all estimated by the world.

It was a warning proclaimed to France, to England, and to all mankind, of the delusive nature of these new opinions; of the folly, the injustice, and the danger of acting upon them in a manner so sweeping and precipitate. It must not be forgotten, that this admonition was not only given by Mr. Burke in his place in the House of Commons, in the beginning of the year 1790, but was given to the world in the work we are now alluding to so early as the close of the year 1790. Now this was not to be wise *after* the event, but to be wise in time, and *before* the event. Mr. Burke may not have foreseen the frightful energies which this great country of France was afterwards to display; he may have supposed that her patriots would so destroy all her sources of prosperity and strength as to annihilate her political consequence among the nations of Europe. He was often guilty of intemperate declamation, and in one of these moments of excitation he made prophecies of this kind; but such sallies and occasional tirades, the natural effusions of his ardent imagination and his sensitive temperament, must not deprive him of his merit; the merit of resisting in time the delusions and the enthusiasm of the new opinions. Observe the stage in the history of the Revolution at which France had arrived when Mr. Burke wrote. The scenes that excited so strongly his feelings and so alarmed his understanding were the violent measures, for instance, of the Constituent Assembly, and the scenes of the 5th and 6th of October, 1789; these were all. But we have had to witness also, in our review of the history, many dreadful events which, when Mr. Burke wrote, had as yet *not* happened—the offensive behaviour of the Legislative Assembly, the outrages of

the 20th of June, the attack of the Tuileries on the 10th of August, the massacres of September, and the trial and execution of the king. This is the point at which we are now ourselves arrived, at the opening of the year 1793. More than two years however *before* this period, Mr. Burke had not only thought and written, but had actually published to the world and addressed to a member of the Constituent Assembly his celebrated Reflections on the Revolution. No work ever excited so much attention, or has been more violently praised and censured. You will see, however, the merit I have attributed to it; a merit which it is indeed impossible for any one fully to comprehend who lived not at the time, but one surely of the most eminent nature that can be attributed to the writings of a statesman—the merit of being wise in time, of seeing through the delusions that are betraying the understandings of all around. And observe further, Mr. Burke's merit is not only that of a political prophet but of a moral prophet; the two were extremely intermingled; they were, not a little, one and the same thing in this extraordinary crisis of the world. But I shall, at first, turn chiefly to those paragraphs which are of a political nature. Mark, then, the passages to which I shall allude; they show not only that, so early as the year 1790, he saw that the constitution which the patriots proposed could not possibly stand; but next, that the manner of their proceeding was totally mistaken; and lastly, that the new opinions themselves were not founded in nature and truth. On the whole, that the Revolution, if it journeyed on in the course in which the popular party had instructed it to go, would ruin, not reform their country, and, if unchecked, ruin Europe also. It is near the close of the work that he objects to the constitution as proposed by La Fayette and his friends, and notices the mistakes that were made; and he concludes with affirming, that, if erected, it can hardly stand. Observe the manner in which he fixes upon the main points of the case, and pronounces upon them; a very few sentences will show you what I mean.

"Passing," he says (page 353), "to the National Assembly, we see a body, in its constitution, with every possible power, and no possible external control; without fundamental laws,

without established maxims, without respected rules of proceeding, which nothing can keep firm to any system whatsoever."

Again. "If possible," he says, "the next assembly (observe how prophetic is this paragraph) must be worse than the present. The present, by destroying and altering every thing, will leave to their successors apparently nothing popular to do; they will be roused by emulation and example to enterprises the boldest and most absurd. To suppose such an assembly sitting in perfect quietude is ridiculous."

Again. "Your all-sufficient legislators, in their hurry to do every thing at once, have forgot to constitute a senate (that is, a second assembly); never before this time was heard of a body politic composed of *one* legislative and active assembly and its executive officers, without such a council, something which might give a bias and steadiness, and preserve something like consistency in the proceedings of the state, which may hold a sort of middle place between the supreme power exercised by the people, or delegated from them, and the mere executive."

Again. "What have they done towards the formation of an executive power? For this they have chosen a degraded king; this, their first executive officer, is to be a machine without any sort of deliberative discretion in any one act of his functionary; at best, he is but a channel to convey to the National Assembly such matter as may import that body to know. The king of France is not the fountain of justice; he neither nominates the judges, nor has a negative; he originates no process, is without the power of suspension, mitigation, or pardon; nor is he more the fountain of honour than of justice: all rewards, all distinctions, are in other hands; he has no generous interest that can excite him to action; at best, his conduct will be passive and defensive."

Again. "In all other countries the office of ministers of state is of the highest dignity; in France it is full of peril and incapable of glory; and they are the only persons in the country who are incapable of a share in the national councils —what ministers! what councils! what a nation!"

These words, taken, for the sake of brevity, from different sentences, and the sentences taken from different passages,

will give you a faint, but for the present, I hope, sufficient notion of the general style of Mr. Burke's remarks on such important points as those he alludes to—the nature of their popular assembly, the want of a second assembly, the office of the king, the situation of the ministers; on the whole, the nature of the executive and legislative powers existing in the constitution. He afterwards proceeds to comment upon the plans of the judicature, the finance, the constitution of the army. He did not foresee, it was impossible to foresee, the obedience which the French armies always paid to the decrees of the National Assembly, and their total indifference to the political changes in Paris; but he at last observes, "that, in the weakness of one kind of authority, and in the fluctuation of all, the officers of the army will remain for some time mutinous and full of faction, until some popular general, who understands the art of conciliating the soldiery, and who possesses the true spirit of command, shall draw the eyes of all men upon himself; armies will obey him on his personal account, and he will then be your master." The first part of this remark was illustrated in the instances of La Fayette and Dumourier, and the latter part in that of Buonaparte. In conclusion, he observes to his friend, "My sentiments may hereafter be of some use to you, in some future form which your commonwealth may take; in the present it can hardly remain; but before its final settlement it may be obliged to pass 'through great varieties of untried being,' and in all its transmigrations be purified by fire and blood."

What I have now done in the way of extract can only point out to you the places in Mr. Burke's work to which you are more particularly to direct your observation, nothing more; you see their spirit of prophecy, and surely of deliberative, comprehensive good sense; which in us mortals is the only foundation of any spirit of prophecy we can pretend to.

Mr. Burke, however, objected also to the whole style and manner of the proceedings of the patriotic party; and as he was here more opposed to the notions and feelings of all friends to freedom at the time, I shall quote from him more at length, and now give you more fully all that he says than I have hitherto done. His great doctrine is (it was very unpalatable at the time) that men should build upon old

foundations, not clear away the ground, to prepare it for new edifices; and he continually refers, as authority, to the patriots of our own country and to the British constitution.

"You might," says he, "if you pleased, have profited of our example, and have given to your recovered freedom a correspondent dignity. Your privileges, though discontinued, were not lost to memory. Your constitution, it is true, whilst you were out of possession, suffered waste and dilapidation; but you possessed in some parts the walls, and in all the foundations of a noble and venerable castle. You might have repaired those walls; you might have built on those old foundations. Your constitution was suspended before it was perfected; but you had the elements of a constitution very nearly as good as could be wished. In your old States you possessed that variety of parts corresponding with the various descriptions of which your community was happily composed; you had all that combination, and all that opposition of interests; you had that action and counteraction which, in the natural and in the political world, from the reciprocal struggle of discordant powers, draws out the harmony of the universe. These opposed and conflicting interests, which you considered as so great a blemish in your old and in our present constitution, interpose a salutary check to all precipitate resolutions; they render deliberation a matter not of choice, but of necessity; they make all change a subject of *compromise*, which naturally begets moderation; they produce *temperaments*, preventing the sore evil of harsh, crude, unqualified reformations, and rendering all the headlong exertions of arbitrary power, in the few or in the many, for ever impracticable. Through that diversity of members and interests, general liberty had as many securities as there were separate views in the several orders; whilst by pressing down the whole by the weight of a real monarchy, the separate parts would have been prevented from warping and starting from their allotted places. You had all these advantages in your ancient States; but you chose to act as if you had never been moulded into civil society, and had every thing to begin anew. You began ill, because you began by despising every thing that belonged to you. You set up your trade without a capital. . . . . By following wise examples you would have

given new examples of wisdom to the world. You would have rendered the cause of freedom venerable in the eyes of every worthy mind in every nation. You would have shamed despotism from the earth, by showing that freedom was not only reconcilable, but, as when disciplined it is, auxiliary to law. You would have had an unoppressive but a productive revenue; you would have had a flourishing commerce to feed it. You would have had a free constitution, a potent monarchy, a disciplined army, a reformed and venerated clergy, a mitigated but spirited nobility, to lead your virtue, not to overlay it; you would have had a liberal order of commons, to emulate and to recruit that nobility. You would have had a protected, satisfied, laborious and obedient people, taught to seek and to recognise the happiness that is to be found by virtue in all conditions; in which consists the true moral equality of mankind, and not in that monstrous fiction, which, by inspiring false ideas and vain expectations into men destined to travel in the obscure walk of laborious life, serves only to aggravate and embitter that real inequality which it never can remove, and which the order of civil life establishes as much for the benefit of those whom it must leave in an humble state, as those whom it is able to exalt to a condition more splendid, but not more happy. You had a smooth and easy career of felicity and glory laid open to you, beyond any thing recorded in the history of the world; but you have shown that difficulty is good for man."

Again, and in another passage,—"Were all these dreadful things necessary? were they the inevitable results of the desperate struggle of determined patriots, compelled to wade through blood and tumult, to the quiet shore of a tranquil and prosperous liberty? No! nothing like it. The fresh ruins of France, which shock our feelings wherever we can turn our eyes, are not the devastations of civil war; they are the sad but instructive monuments of rash and ignorant counsel in time of profound peace. They are the display of inconsiderate and presumptuous, because unresisted and irresistible authority. The persons who have thus squandered away the precious treasure of their crimes, the persons who have made this prodigal and wild waste of public evils (the last stake reserved for the ultimate ransom of the state) have

met in their progress with little, or rather with no opposition at all. Their whole march was more like a triumphal procession, than the progress of a war. Their pioneers have gone before them, and demolished and laid every thing level at their feet. Not one drop of *their* blood have they shed in the cause of the country they have ruined. They have made no sacrifices to their projects, of greater consequence than their shoe buckles, whilst they were imprisoning their king, murdering their fellow citizens, and bathing in tears, and plunging in poverty and distress, thousands of worthy men and worthy families. Their cruelty has not even been the base result of fear; it has been the effect of their sense of perfect safety, in authorizing treasons, robberies, rapes, assassinations, slaughters and burnings throughout their harassed land. But the cause of all was plain from the beginning."

Again,—"I know how easy a topic it is to dwell on the faults of departed greatness. By a revolution in the state, the fawning sycophant of yesterday is converted into the austere critic of the present hour. But steady independent minds, when they have an object of so serious a concern to mankind as government, under their contemplation, will disdain to assume the parts of satirists and declaimers. They will judge of human institutions as they do of human characters; they will sort out the good from the evil, which is mixed in mortal institutions as it is in mortal men.

"Your government in France, though usually, and I think justly, reputed the best of the unqualified or ill-qualified monarchies, was still full of abuses. These abuses accumulated in a length of time, as they must accumulate in every monarchy, not under the constant inspection of a popular representative. I am no stranger to the faults and defects of the subverted government of France; and I think I am not inclined by nature or policy to make a panegyric upon any thing which is a just and natural object of censure. But the question is not now of the vices of that monarchy, but of its existence. Is it then true that the French government was such as to be incapable or undeserving of reform; so that it was of absolute necessity the whole fabric should be at once pulled down, and the area cleared for the erection of a theo-

retic experimental edifice in its place? All France was of a different opinion in the beginning of the year 1789. The instructions to the representatives to the States General, from every district in that kingdom, were filled with projects for the reformation of that government, without the remotest suggestion of a design to destroy it. Had such a design been then even insinuated, I believe there would have been but one voice, and that voice for rejecting it with scorn and horror."

Again, and in another passage,—"Upon a free constitution, there was but one opinion in France. The absolute monarchy was at an end. It breathed its last, without a groan, without a struggle, without convulsion. All the struggle, all the dissension, arose afterwards upon the preference of a despotic democracy to a government of reciprocal control. The triumph of the victorious party was over the principles of a British constitution."

Again,—"Indeed, when I consider the face of the kingdom of France, the multitude and opulence of her cities, the useful magnificence of her spacious high roads and bridges, the opportunity of her artificial canals and navigations opening the conveniences of maritime communication, through a solid continent of so immense an extent; when I turn my eyes to the stupendous works of her ports and harbours, and to her whole naval apparatus, whether for war or trade; when I bring before my view the number of her fortifications, constructed with so bold and masterly a skill, and made and maintained at so prodigious a charge, presenting an armed front and impenetrable barrier to her enemies upon every side; when I recollect how very small a part of that extensive region is without cultivation, and to what complete perfection the culture of many of the best productions of the earth have been brought in France; when I reflect on the excellence of her manufactures and fabrics, second to none but ours, and in some particulars not second; when I contemplate the grand foundations of charity, public and private; when I survey the state of all the arts that beautify and polish life; when I reckon the men she has bred for extending her fame in war, her able statesmen, the multitude of her profound lawyers and theologians, her philosophers, her critics, her historians and antiquaries, her poets and her orators, sacred and profane; I

behold in all this, something which awes and commands the imagination, which checks the mind on the brink of precipitate and indiscriminate censure, and which demands, that we should very seriously examine, what and how great are the latent vices that could authorize us at once to level so spacious a fabric with the ground. I do not recognise in this view of things, the despotism of Turkey. Nor do I discern the character of a government that has been, on the whole so oppressive, or so corrupt, or so negligent, as to be utterly unfit *for all reformation.* I must think such a government well deserved to have its excellences heightened, its faults corrected, and its capacities improved into a British constitution."

Again,—"It is this inability to wrestle with difficulty, which has obliged the arbitrary Assembly of France to commence their schemes of reform with abolition and total destruction. But is it in destroying and pulling down that skill is displayed? Your mob can do this as well at least as your assemblies. The shallowest understanding, the rudest hand, is more than equal to that task. Rage and frenzy will pull down more in half an hour, than prudence, deliberation, and foresight can build up in a hundred years. The errors and defects of old establishments are visible and palpable. It calls for little ability to point them out, and where absolute power is given, it requires but a word wholly to abolish the vice and the establishment together. The same lazy but restless disposition, which loves sloth and hates quiet, directs these politicians, when they come to work for supplying the place of what they have destroyed. To make every thing the reverse of what they have seen is quite as easy as to destroy. No difficulties occur in what has never been tried. Criticism is almost baffled in discovering the defects of what has not existed; and eager enthusiasm, and cheating hope, have all the wide field of imagination in which they may expatiate with little or no opposition.

"At once to preserve and to reform is quite another thing. When the useful parts of an old establishment are kept, and what is superadded is to be fitted to what is retained, a vigorous mind, steady persevering attention, various powers of comparison and combination, and the resources of an under-

standing fruitful in expedients are to be exercised; they are to be exercised in a continued conflict with the combined force of opposite vices; with the obstinacy that rejects all improvement, and the levity that is fatigued and disgusted with every thing of which it is in possession. But you may object, 'A process of this kind is slow; it is not fit for an assembly, which glories in performing in a few months the work of ages: such a mode of reforming, possibly, might take up many years.' Without question it might; and it ought. It is one of the excellencies of a method in which time is among the assistants, that its operation is slow, and in some cases almost imperceptible. If circumspection and caution are a part of wisdom, when we work only on inanimate matter, surely they become a part of duty too, when the subject of our demolition and construction is not brick and timber, but sentient beings, by the sudden alteration of whose state, condition, and habits, multitudes may be rendered miserable. But it seems as if it were the prevalent opinion in Paris that an unfeeling heart, and an undoubting confidence, are the sole qualifications for a perfect legislator. Far different are my ideas of that high office. The true lawgiver ought to have a heart full of sensibility; he ought to love and respect his kind, and to fear himself. It may be allowed to his temperament to catch his ultimate object by an intuitive glance; but his movements towards it ought to be deliberate. Political arrangement, as it is a work for social ends, is to be only wrought by social means. There, mind must conspire with mind. Time is required to produce that union of minds which alone can produce all the good we aim at. Our patience will achieve more than our force. If I might venture to appeal to what is so much out of fashion at Paris, I mean to experience, I should tell you, that in my course I have known, and, according to my measure, have co-operated with great men; and I have never yet seen any plan which has not been mended by the observations of those who were much inferior in understanding to the person who took the lead in the business. By a slow but well-sustained progress, the effect of each step is watched; the good or ill success of the first, gives light to us in the second; and so, from light to light, we are conducted with safety through the whole series. We see that the parts of the system do not

clash. The evils latent in the most promising contrivances are provided for as they arise; one advantage is as little as possible sacrificed to another. We compensate, we reconcile, we balance. We are enabled to unite into a consistent whole the various anomalies and contending principles that are found in the minds and affairs of men. From hence arises, not an excellence in simplicity, but one far superior, an excellence in composition. Where the great interests of mankind are concerned through a long succession of generations, that succession ought to be admitted into some share in the councils which are so deeply to affect them. If justice requires this, the work itself requires the aid of more minds than one age can furnish. It is from this view of things that the best legislators have been often satisfied with the establishment of some sure, solid, and ruling principle in government; a power like that which some of the philosophers have called a plastic nature; and having fixed the principle, they have left it afterwards to its own operation.

"To proceed in this manner, that is, to proceed with a presiding principle, and a prolific energy, is with me the criterion of profound wisdom. What your politicians think the marks of a bold, hardy genius, are only proofs of a deplorable want of ability. By their violent haste, and their defiance of the process of nature, they are delivered over blindly to every projector and adventurer, to every alchymist and empiric. They despair of turning to account any thing that is common."

I have hitherto alluded to the passages which I consider as sufficient to show, that Mr. Burke was wiser than were the friends of freedom in the year 1790, and that he was a *political* prophet.

I will now allude to what I conceive to be his merit, as a moral prophet. I do not think, that this part of Mr. Burke's work was at the time properly understood. The English people have never much studied books and treatises on morals, though they have had great moral writers, Bishop Butler for instance: they seem, like the celebrated nation of antiquity, to have been contented to place between themselves and others, the distinction, that they would *practise* virtue, and let *others talk* about it; morals and metaphysics have more

occupied the attention of our northern neighbours. Mr. Burke must have been personally acquainted with the great Scotch writers, and understood the subjects of morals, on which they had written with such success, perfectly well; better than did his brother statesmen in our houses of legislature, far better than did the English public; and he does not seem to me, to have made a sufficient allowance for the want of familiarity with such topics, which I conceive certainly then existed in the community. He stops not to explain and exhibit all his meaning with the distinctness, which he might have done; but you will hereafter find, if you come to consider, what may be called, the moral situation of this country, and of Europe, that all the deviations from the established notions of mankind, that were afterwards to appear, were anticipated and protested against, in the passages I shall soon have to read to you: the change that was to take place, Mr. Burke saw distinctly. Man, as you know, is a creature of reason and feeling: he saw distinctly that it was attempted to make him, in a word, the creature of *reason* only, and he protested against this, as unnatural, foolish, and ridiculous; as unfavourable to his happiness; at all events, as fatal to every thing, that was established in civilized Europe. I will allude more particularly for the present to one great and main point.

The moral system of those, who patronised the new opinions, was at the time, founded on the doctrine of utility; this doctrine, as too many of them, indeed as they all understood it, left every thing to the decision of calculation. A man was at every turn to set himself to consider, whether what he was *going* to do was likely to benefit his species, and it was to him to be right or wrong accordingly. Mr. Burke, on the contrary, had insisted on the authority of instinct and natural feelings, and the common notions of duty, that arise from them. The former system was evidently favourable to revolutions, the latter not. Men, for instance, are prevented from engaging in revolutions, by their existing associations, habits of thought and feeling, social enjoyments, domestic charities. He, on the contrary, who thinks, not of these, but only of the distant and ultimate consequences, to be calculated on every occasion of his being called to act, who has not his notions of duty prepared and arranged under general rules, is

ready for any new system or enterprise, that may be proposed to him by any leader of revolutions, for he has only to resolve the case into some case of utility or the general good, and no further difficulty remains.

To illustrate what I am describing—Suppose a house on fire—and according to what was then the real and what was afterwards to become the avowed morality of the followers of the new opinions (I take the instance from one of their writers, Mr. Godwin), a man was to pluck from out of it, not his mother, his wife, or his benefactor, who might be supposed not likely to benefit the world, but any philosopher, like Fénélon, who certainly *would*. According to Mr. Burke he was to obey his natural instincts and feelings, and his established notions of duty, and save his wife, his mother, or benefactor, without speculating on the matter for a moment.

Now though you may see the propriety of Mr. Burke's system in this case, for it is a strong one, you may not, in all the cases that might be proposed, though the same in principle; and Mr. Burke might have dedicated a page to the consideration of the doctrine of his opponents, the doctrine of utility, not as it ought to be understood, but as they described it. He never condescends, however, to do so, in a single sentence, and leaves the question to be decided, if made a question at all, by the common sense and common feelings of mankind. This contempt in Mr. Burke of this part of the new philosophy has rendered this portion of his work (a short but most important one) indistinct to the general reader, and unsatisfactory; and given it an appearance of mere declamation, and vague, and even superficial reasoning; but very unjustly, as I conceive; it is his opponents, that are the declaimers, and superficial reasoners, not *he*. Not only might Mr. Burke have readily explained himself, if he had chosen, but they who meditate these subjects, will, I apprehend, arrive pretty nearly at Mr. Burke's system of moral opinions; surely not at the system of his opponents. For with regard to the point more immediately before us, the doctrine of utility, this doctrine may be, to a considerable extent, admitted; it may even be altogether admitted; it is the doctrine of a very respectable school of moralists, both among the ancients and the moderns, it is the system of bene-

volence; but then, it cannot be understood, as the patrons of the new opinions understood it, and as *at first sight* it might very naturally be understood; the very circumstance of its being so favourable to revolutions shows that it cannot, for revolutions cannot be the natural order of things, in which men are intended to live. The truth is, that for the sake of utility itself, the principle cannot be interpreted in any revolutionary manner, not so interpreted that men are to neglect the common duties of life; *for it is not thus, that mankind can be served. This* therefore is no proper system of *utility*; it cannot be *useful* to the world, for men to break through and cast from them the common ties of nature, for views of contingent happiness to their species. Men are not to stand speculating upon the possible consequences of every action, before they perform it, instead of doing instantly what they have always understood to be right. The principle of utility is, immediately after the first reception of it by the mind as a general principle, to be shaped out into general rules, to which ever after, the conduct, without further thought, is to be adapted; it is to be converted, if I may make use of such a metaphor, into great high roads, in which every man is to travel in his journey through life; and he is not on every occasion to stop and turn aside into a pathless moor, over which he is to wander in pursuit of objects, which he expects somewhere or other to find, at a distance in the horizon. This is not to understand the doctrine of utility.

Dr. Paley, in the preliminary books of his Moral Philosophy, comes to the conclusion, that whatever is useful is right; he therefore immediately in the subsequent chapters sets himself to show, that the principle of utility necessarily assumes the shape of the great duties of life; that the performance of these great ordinary duties is indispensable to the public good, while it is the best chance of happiness for the individual. Dr. Paley did not, however, warn his readers, as he ought to have done, that the doctrine of utility might be misinterpreted, and was liable to be so; he has a chapter on general rules, no doubt; but he should have still more distinctly said, that men were *not* on every occasion, every man for himself, to institute calculations, as if no general rules existed; that such speculations on the consequences of actions

should have been entered into long before, should have subsided into general rules, and then be supposed terminated for ever; that such speculations on the spur of the moment, and amid the temptations or necessities of the moment, were only fitted to afford an opportunity to every weak man to decide erroneously, and to every bad man to decide licentiously; and would in truth lead directly to the destruction of all the morality that existed in the world; existing as it does, and ever did, and ever must, on the obedience of men to general rules. With all my most grateful remembrance of what I owe to Paley, the most sensible of all writers, I consider his work, as in this point, defective, and the two first books of his Moral Philosophy (with the exception of his admirable chapter on Human Happiness,) as the least valuable of any thing he ever wrote. There is no proper knowledge of the subject imparted to the reader, or apparently possessed by the writer. I have already mentioned that the English public had not attended to inquiries of this kind. It is remarkable, that Mr Hume saw clearly the abuse, to which the doctrine of utility, which he had adopted, was liable; and provided against it, in a note to his Treatise on Morals. "What wonder then," he says, in his text, "if we can pronounce no judgment concerning the character and conduct of men, without considering the tendencies of their actions, and the happiness or misery which thence arises to society?" Here we have the doctrine of utility. But he immediately subjoins a note; and in the course of it he observes, "When the interests of one country interfere with those of another, we estimate the merits of a statesman by the good or ill which results to his *own* country from his measures and counsels, without regard to the prejudice which it brings on its enemies and rivals. His fellow citizens are the objects which lie nearest the eye, while we determine his character; and as nature has implanted in every one a superior affection to his own country, we never expect any regard to distant nations, when a competition arises. Not to mention, that while every man consults the good of his *own* community, we are sensible, that the *general* interest of mankind is better promoted, than by any loose, indeterminate views to the good of a species, whence no beneficial action could ever result, for want of a duly limited

object on which they could exert themselves." Here we have in this last sentence, the general doctrine of utility properly limited and accommodated to human practice. Mr. Hume, in this treatise, laboured to show that all moral distinctions must be ultimately resolved into the principle of utility; and this particular system of morals was never before or since so completely drawn out and exhibited, nor indeed can any system of morals be constructed, in which the principle of utility must not make a very conspicuous appearance. "Utilitas justi prope mater et æqui." But Mr. Hume takes care to observe in another note, as in the former, "It is wisely ordained by nature, that private connexions should commonly prevail over universal views and considerations; otherwise our affections and actions would be dissipated and lost for want of a proper limited object." "Wisely ordained," says Mr. Hume, "by nature;" that is, nature itself, or rather our Creator, sanctions and establishes the authority of instincts and natural feelings, or the system of Mr. Burke, as the best mode of attaining all that is desired by the principle of utility; and the patrons of this system of utility must, therefore, admit the theory of instincts and natural feelings, and acknowledge their authority, if they mean to be faithful to their own doctrines, and really carry into practical effect the principle of utility. Let them make the experiment, and they will find that such instincts and natural feelings will be always sanctioned by the principle of utility, if they choose to appeal to it, and to admit of no other criterion.

But here it will be observed that, on this system, no changes could ever be attempted, no abuses corrected, no efforts for mankind made, no revolutions, however desirable, ever thought of; these all proceed upon the doctrine of mere expediency, and the calculation, at the time, of consequences. Undoubtedly they do, and must be left to do so; and where the expediency, or rather the necessity, can be made out, they are sufficiently sanctioned; but then it must be observed, that the great instincts and feelings of our nature having been already sanctioned by this principle of expediency, the great rules of human conduct having been already adjusted, all violence done to them, all deviations that afterwards occur, in revolutions or on whatever occasion, for

the sake of our liberties as we suppose, of our country, or mankind, must be considered as exceptions to prior general rules, exceptions to those common maxims of duty, on which all practical virtue depends, on which the welfare and security of all human society can alone be rested. These deviations from general rules may, on great occasions, sometimes lead to actions of the most exalted virtue: this is possible; still they must be considered as actions of great responsibility, and as rather coming within the province of casuistry than any ordinary system of moral obligation. And this is the important point. The new morality was a sort of revolutionary morality, springing out of revolutionary times, and fitted for revolutionary purposes.

I may appear converting my lecture into a treatise on morality; but the subject is curious, is not without its difficulty, and is in truth (strange as it may at first appear) fundamentally connected with the general subject of the French Revolution, far more than those can well suppose, who lived not at the time.

I shall probably have to advert to it again before I close hereafter my remarks on that great event; what I have now said, I have only said, because I thought it necessary to enable those who have not considered these subjects properly to comprehend the extracts I am going to read from Mr. Burke. I may observe, indeed, in conclusion, that those who may hereafter address themselves to this high argument, this great subject of the theory of morals, and endeavour to consider it in an elementary manner, will not proceed far, before they will find themselves involved in metaphysical inquiries of the most subtle nature; they will perceive how little rest or satisfaction can be here obtained for their thoughts; and, with some surprise and disappointment, they will feel themselves obliged to return from their unprofitable wanderings, to join the mere vulgar in their beaten road, taking their duties as they see them understood, and as they feel them to be rightly understood, by the common mass of mankind. They will no longer labour to penetrate into the metaphysics of morals, the nature of the sentiment for instance, that is, what is the origin of the very notion of right and wrong at all; the criterion, or whether there is one and the same quality in all

actions that are morally right (utility, for instance); the motive, or what is the influence by which we are urged to do what we think right.

These questions must be, no doubt, considered by the student; but after having been duly and regularly considered, a reasonable man will turn away, and, adopting some system of benevolence properly understood, or of instincts and natural feelings, or both conjoined, leave such abstruse disquisitions to the schools, and be content.

All such modest and reasonable inquirers will be satisfied to perceive, that the Almighty Master has so constituted us, that we cannot mistake our duties in practice, though he may not have given us faculties to understand them in their elementary theory; that we know what we are to pursue, and what to shun; know all that is necessary for our own well-being here and hereafter—our own responsibility, his awful observance of us. These great truths are surely sufficient, though the great Creator may not have thought it necessary so to gratify our curiosity as to unveil to us the secret springs and movements of that moral machinery which (if I may so presume to speak) he evidently applies, and has always applied, to the sentient and intelligent beings whom he has placed in this our portion of his universe. "The secrets of nature" is a phrase familiar to every philosopher. These secrets occur in morals as in other subjects. All knowledge imparted to finite beings must end somewhere. By the phrase "the secrets of nature," the philosopher means only to allude to that part of knowledge which the great Author of our being and of the world has, in our present state, thought proper in his wisdom to withhold from us.

I will now offer you some extracts from Mr. Burke. They describe or anticipate, as I have announced to you, the moral phenomena which were already, in 1790, beginning to appear, and which, as you will find, afterwards did appear, in a most remarkable manner, both in this country and in the rest of Europe, as the Revolution proceeded—to a degree, as I have mentioned, which, not living at the time, you cannot possibly conceive.

"But now," says Mr. Burke, "all is to be changed. All the pleasing illusions, which made power gentle, and obedience liberal, which harmonized the different shades of life,

and which, by a bland assimilation, incorporated into politics the sentiments which beautify and soften private society, are to be dissolved by this new conquering empire of light and reason. All the decent drapery of life is to be rudely torn off. All the superadded ideas, furnished from the wardrobe of a moral imagination, which the heart owns and the understanding ratifies (as necessary to cover the defects of our naked shivering nature, and to raise it to dignity in our own estimation), are to be exploded as a ridiculous, absurd, and antiquated fashion. "

"On this scheme of things a king is but a man, a queen is but a woman, a woman is but an animal, and an animal not of the highest order. All homage paid to the sex in general as such, and without distinct views, is to be regarded as romance and folly. Regicide, and parricide, and sacrilege are but fictions of superstition, corrupting jurisprudence by de stroying its simplicity. The murder of a king, or a queen, or a bishop, or a father, are only common homicide; and, if the people are by any chance or in any way gainers by it, a sort of homicide much the most pardonable, and into which we ought not to make too severe a scrutiny.

"On the scheme of this barbarous philosophy, which is the offspring of cold hearts and muddy understandings, and which is as void of solid wisdom as it is destitute of all taste and elegance, laws are to be supported only by their own terrors, and by the concern which each individual may find in them from his own private speculations, or can spare to them from his own private interests. In the groves of *their* academy, at the end of every vista, you see nothing but the gallows. Nothing is left which engages the affections on the part of the commonwealth. On the principles of this mechanic philosophy, our institutions can never be embodied, if I may use the expression, in persons; so as to create in us love, veneration, admiration, or attachment. But that sort of reason which banishes the affections, is incapable of filling their place."

And again, in another place,—"Four hundred years have gone over us, but I believe we are not materially changed since that period. Thanks to our sullen resistance to innovation, thanks to the cold sluggishness of our national character, we still bear the stamp of our forefathers. We

have not (as I conceive) lost the generosity and dignity of thinking of the fourteenth century; nor as yet have we subtilized ourselves into savages. We are not the converts of Rousseau; we are not the disciples of Voltaire; Helvetius has made no progress amongst us. Atheists are not our preachers; madmen are not our lawgivers. We know that *we* have made no discoveries, and we think that no discoveries are to be made, in morality; nor many in the great principles of government; nor in the ideas of liberty, which were understood, long before we were born, altogether as well as they will be, after the grave has heaped its mould upon our presumption, and the silent tomb shall have imposed its law on our pert loquacity. In England we have not yet been completely embowelled of our natural entrails; we still feel within us, and we cherish and cultivate those inbred sentiments which are the faithful guardians, the active monitors of our duty, the true supporters of all liberal and manly morals. We have not been drawn and trussed, in order that we may be filled, like stuffed birds in a museum, with chaff and rags and paltry blurred shreds of paper about the rights of man. We preserve the whole of our feelings still native and entire, unsophisticated by pedantry and infidelity. We have real hearts of flesh and blood beating in our bosoms. We fear God; we look up with awe to kings, with affection to parliaments, with duty to magistrates, with reverence to priests, and with respect to nobility. Why? Because when such ideas are brought before our minds, it is *natural* to be so affected; because all other feelings are false and spurious, and tend to corrupt our minds, to vitiate our primary morals, to render us unfit for rational liberty; and by teaching us a servile, licentious, and abandoned insolence, to be our low sport for a few holidays, to make us perfectly fit for and justly deserving of slavery, through the whole course of our lives.

"You see, sir, that in this enlightened age I am bold enough to confess that we are generally men of untaught feelings; that instead of casting away all our old prejudices, we cherish them to a very considerable degree, and, to take more shame to ourselves, we cherish them because they are prejudices; and the longer they have lasted, and the more generally they have prevailed, the more we cherish them."

Prejudice, I stop to mention, is a word generally used in a bad sense, but is not necessarily an opinion that is wrong, but only an opinion, whether right or wrong, one that is held without knowing its reason. Mr. Burke does not stay to give this explanation.

"We are afraid to put men to live and trade each on his own private stock of reason, because we suspect that the stock in each man is small, and that the individuals would do better to avail themselves of the general bank and capital of nations and of ages. Many of our men of speculation, instead of exploding general prejudices, employ their sagacity to discover the latent wisdom which prevails in them. If they find what they seek, and they seldom fail, they think it more wise to continue the prejudice, with the reason involved, than to cast away the coat of prejudice, and to leave nothing but the naked reason; because prejudice, with its reason, has a motive to give action to that reason, and an affection which will give it permanence. Prejudice is of ready application in the emergency; it previously engages the mind in a steady course of wisdom and virtue, and does not leave the man hesitating in the moment of decision, sceptical, puzzled, and unresolved. Prejudice renders a man's virtue his habit; and not a series of unconnected acts. Through just prejudice, his duty becomes a part of his nature."

Such are the sentiments to be found in the work of Mr. Burke; not only conceived and written during the spring and summer of 1790, but, as I must again and again repeat, published at the close of 1790, full two years before that stage of the Revolution, at which we are now arrived, the execution of the king. It was followed immediately by another work, "A Letter to a Member of the National Assembly;" and again, soon after, by his "Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs;" a work well worthy to support his Reflections, and full of important wisdom. In each of them may be found matter of the same prophetic nature with what I have quoted from the Reflections. Of this, his greater work (the Reflections), the fault may be, and, indeed is, that Mr. Burke did not sufficiently exhibit the prior offences of the privileged orders, and their want of political virtue and wisdom, the general disrespect into which the old government had justly fallen, by its long defiance of public opinion, and its disregard

of its duties; the fault of Mr. Burke's work may be also, that he makes not sufficient allowance for the difficulties, with which the members of the Constituent Assembly had to struggle, nor states the faults that were committed by the court party; but when all this has been admitted, as I think it must, such paragraphs, as I have selected from the midst of many, many, others of the same kind, show clearly a penetrating and philosophic mind, that saw distinctly what others did not see, the full danger of this invasion of the world by the new opinions; that, whether *politically* or *morally* considered, it was impossible that these opinions should lead to practical good; that it was not for the interest of France or of mankind ever to adopt them; and still less in so headlong a manner to cast off their old opinions; that the politicians of the day every where were too sanguine, too daring, too experimental; that neither in morals, nor in governments could men be rendered wiser, or happier, by resolving, on system, to demolish every thing and begin anew; that this was neither the tone nor the manner of those who deserved to be thought the instructors and improvers either of their own country or of mankind. These were the general views and doctrines of Mr. Burke, at a season of somewhat universal enthusiasm, running (and very violently) in a contrary direction among the young and the intelligent more especially wherever they were found; and this is a merit, and a very extraordinary merit, which, amidst all the faults of his mind (and they grew more striking as the Revolution proceeded), must not be denied him, and this has rendered his book (I speak of his Reflections, though not at all excluding, much the contrary, his Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs) so invaluable to the same description of most important persons in a community, the young and the intelligent, if they will but, as they are always bound to do, seize upon the wisdom of a book, and cast away such passages as may appear intemperate and less worthy to be retained.

To them indeed, thus considered, and reference being had to such objections as I have made, and as are sufficiently obvious, it is a work of the most eminent usefulness and weighty admonition, because the principles alluded to and enforced, are as unchangeable as Nature itself, and of an application that can never cease.

LECTURE XXXV.

STATE OF ENGLAND IN 1792.

THE execution of the king is an epoch in the history of the French Revolution; it was the signal of the entire triumph, as I have already mentioned, of the new opinions over the old. From this moment no compromise seemed possible, the contest was to be mortal. This impolitic as well as cruel act was, on the part of the French Convention, a defiance of all Europe. "You have thrown down the gauntlet to kings," said the ferocious Danton; "this gauntlet is the head of a king." In this mortal strife between the new and old opinions, our own country was now to mingle; and this is too important an event in the history of the French Revolution, as well as our own, not to be recommended to your particular consideration. I have already, to a certain degree, prepared you for this subject, for I adverted to the effects produced on the friends of freedom in this country, and on our writers, by the rise and progress of the new opinions in France. I pointed out to you the memorable discussion that took place in the House of Commons, between Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox; and I have very fully called your attention to the celebrated publication of the former statesman, his "Reflections on the Revolution of France;" a work which was read by every man of any intelligence in the kingdom; and, combined with the interesting events that were from that time every day taking place in Paris, made the French Revolution a subject of constant observance and conversation to all persons of reflecting minds. I must now pursue the subject a little further. It is the year 1792 that you must fix your eyes upon. During this year in France, as you are aware, the legislative assembly had become more distrustful of the king, his situation more intolerable; the Girondists, the

Jacobins, had more and more prevailed; the Austrian war had taken place; the 10th of August, the massacres of September, the meeting of the Convention, the manifesto and invasion of the Duke of Brunswick, his retreat, and the successful invasion of the Low Countries by Dumourier; finally, on the meeting of the Convention, a republic had been proclaimed, furious decrees had followed, that seemed to menace Europe; and it was now too plain, that the king would, ere long, be transferred from his prison to the scaffold; these were events that could not but deeply agitate a country like our own; and it is this agitation, the more striking particulars of which you are now to consider.

I must premise a few remarks. The war between the new opinions and the old, was in morals what I have already described to you, when I alluded to the writings of Burke; but in politics it was not a little between the feudal notions of Europe, and what may in a general manner be termed republican notions; between the prerogative of the monarch, the rights of privileged orders, the law of primogeniture—between these and those views of man and of society, which may be termed popular and republican views; such views as might be expected to be found among the members of representative bodies, when issuing immediately from the people, and readily sympathizing with their opinions. Reasoners of these opposite descriptions naturally fixed their eyes, and embarked their feelings in the striking scenes exhibited before them in the French Revolution; receiving different impressions, and drawing different conclusions.

For a certain period our dissensions of this kind were sufficiently general in their nature, and moderate in their expressions; were so in the main, and with some exceptions; but towards the middle and close of 1792, great changes of sentiment had taken place, and the question at issue had become nearly this: whether the Revolution, whether the violent party in France at least, ought or ought not to be put down, for the sake of Europe, and the very existence of civilized society. And with regard to this question, it must be observed, that from the proselytizing spirit, the furious decrees, and revolting crimes of the Revolution on the one side, and from the manifesto and the invasion of the Duke of Brunswick on the

other, each party had topics enough to urge, and the contending passions of all public and private men in this country had become at last perfectly ungovernable; all moderation was lost, and all candour; and the parties became quite incapable of listening to each other.

But to enter a little more into the detail. The French Revolution was at first favourably received in this country; but ours is a mixed government, and those who live under it have always consisted of men distinctly differing in their opinions, and surveying, with very different eyes, the prerogatives of the crown and the privileges of the people; admitting the positive value of both the one and the other, but entertaining very different notions of their relative importance. It was therefore impossible that such a work as Mr. Burke's Reflections should not make a very wide and deep impression, at the time that it appeared, on the minds of the community; carrying along with it all those, in the first place, who might be classed under the general denomination of Tories, or the upholders of prerogative; and obliging, in the second place, even a certain portion of the Whigs, or the upholders of privilege, to pause and hesitate and at last to assent to the reasonings of its author; finally, on a principle of alarm, to support the measures of the ministers, who had entirely sympathized with Mr. Burke. Still of this party of the Whigs there were remaining those forming a third division of opinion, who entirely differed both from their political friends, the Alarmists, and from their original political opponents in the Tory party; and who contended, Mr. Fox at their head, that there was an end of freedom, if such sentiments as those that appeared in the Reflections of Mr. Burke were suffered to prevail; that the French Revolution was not fairly treated; that its faults and crimes were to be deplored, *not* made an argument against all revolutions; that excesses in cases of this kind were unavoidable; and that even the worst excesses only showed what the former government had been, and how dreadful were the evils that were by the Revolution to be removed.

It was in this state of things that appeared the celebrated work of Paine, his answer to Mr. Burke, his Rights of Man. The first part was published early in 1791; Mr. Burke con-

tinued to write in the same strain, and to the same effect as he had done before; and the second part of Paine's Rights of Man, combining as the author held, principle and practice, was published by him in February, 1792.

Paine is a writer to be numbered with those few who are so supereminently fitted to address the great mass of mankind; with Swift, with Franklin, and with Cobbett: of all these Paine is perhaps the most so; as having a greater power of occasionally producing those striking images, which carry an argument along with them, and from which, when once received, the mind of a reader, more particularly of an ordinary reader, can never afterwards get clear. Paine appeared in these publications as the great advocate for representative bodies, in preference to monarchies; of republican notions, in preference to feudal; of new, in opposition to old opinions; and he endeavoured to persuade the people of England to put down their own government, as one of imperfection and abuse, and form another on the new model of a representative body, and on the principles of the rights of man.

The work of Paine was very far from falling lifeless from the press; it kindled as it passed (and it passed every where), the combustible materials of the lower orders, affecting indeed to a considerable degree the middle ranks also, independent tradesmen for instance, and manufacturers; and the war between the new opinions and the old, though not with such unhappy fury, or with the same reason as in France, every where had for some time, during the years 1790, 1791, and beginning of 1792, pervaded society even in these islands, and had at last become very animated and violent about the middle and close of 1792.

The great topic of Paine is the ridicule of the institution of monarchy. Before you look at the work, I will refer you to a passage in Gibbon; the beginning of his seventh chapter written some years before, when such a stormy state of the world as now existed, was little in the contemplation of this philosophic historian. "Of the various forms of government," says Mr. Gibbon, "which have prevailed in the world, an hereditary monarchy seems to present the fairest scope for ridicule. Is it possible to relate, without an indignant smile, that, on the father's decease, the property of a nation, like

that of a drove of oxen, descends to his infant son, as yet unknown to mankind and to himself; and that the bravest warriors, and the wisest statesmen, relinquishing their natural right to empire, approach the royal cradle with bended knees, and protestations of inviolable fidelity? Satire and declamation may paint these obvious topics in the most dazzling colours, but our more serious thoughts will respect an useful prejudice, that establishes a rule of succession, independent of the passions of mankind; and we shall cheerfully acquiesce in any expedient, that deprives the multitude of the dangerous, and indeed the ideal, power of giving themselves a master."

"The superior prerogative of birth," he subjoins, "where it has obtained the sanction of time and popular opinion, is the plainest and least invidious of all distinctions among mankind. The acknowledged right extinguishes the hopes of faction, and the conscious security disarms the cruelty of the monarch. To the firm establishment of this idea, we owe the peaceful succession and mild administration of European monarchies."

Reasonings of the kind thus delivered by Mr. Gibbon had long obtained an entire possession of the thoughts of intelligent men among the British public; there was always a sort of instability, and a feverish uncertainty, supposed to belong to all republican governments. No more fatal objection could occur to the members of a community, like ours, long familiarized to the peaceful enjoyment of property, the acquisitions of industry, the comforts of domestic and social life, the uninterrupted administration of equal laws amid a general state of repose; the exercise, wherever the eye turned, of the quiet virtues of mankind, and the regular enjoyment of all the blessings of established order. A deep impression of these paramount advantages was the great obstacle in the way of the success of Paine's revolutionary doctrines; his opponents, among the sober-minded, even when driven to their last hold (as in these times of experimental hope, eternal debate, and reckless fury, they often were) could always contend, that America was a new country, where there could be no difficulty, and England an old one; and that it was one thing, to construct a new government, where none at the time existed; another, to sweep away, for the purposes of public

happiness, a government already established. These distinctions were duly insisted upon by men of sense and more matured understandings; but younger and wilder spirits, the sanguine and the bold, more particularly the men of genius, and often, those marked by a more ardent benevolence and generous disposition, had not a little taken fire in the general conflagration. The pages of Paine were diligently perused, and the work actively circulated, even in cheap editions, and thrown among the vulgar; and the result was, the greatest uneasiness and alarm among the privileged orders, the people of property, and all who were properly satisfied with their condition. The doctrines of Paine breathed open war not only against Mr. Burke, and his constitution of England, but against all the established governments of Europe. In the dedication to General Washington, consisting of about eight lines, the four last are, "that he prays, the rights of man may become as universal as the president's benevolence can wish, and that Washington may enjoy the happiness of seeing the new world regenerate the old." The close of the first part of the Rights of Man was in the same strain. "From the revolutions," says he, "of America and France, and the symptoms that have appeared in other countries, it is evident that the opinion of the world is changing with respect to systems of government, and that revolutions are not within the compass of political calculations. The progress of time and circumstances, which men assign to the progress of great changes, is too mechanical to measure the force of the mind, and the rapidity of reflection, by which revolutions are generated: all the old governments have received a shock, from those that already appear, and which were once more improbable, and are a greater subject of wonder, than a general revolution in Europe would be now." And again immediately afterwards (p. 158), "What were formerly called revolutions, were little more than a change of persons, or an alteration of local circumstances. They rose and fell like things of course, and had nothing in their existence, or their fate, that could influence beyond the spot that produced them. But what we now see in the world, from the revolutions of America and France, are a renovation of the natural order of things, a system of principles, as universal as truth and the existence of man, and combining moral

with political happiness and national prosperity." He concludes with a word of advice. "As it is not difficult to perceive, from the enlightened state of mankind, that hereditary governments are verging to their decline, and that revolutions, on the broad basis of national sovereignty and government by representation, are making their way in Europe, it would be an act of wisdom to anticipate their approach, and produce revolutions by reason and accommodation, rather than commit them to the issue of convulsions. From what we now see, nothing of reform in the political world ought to be held improbable; it is an age of revolutions, in which every thing may be looked for. The intrigue of courts, by which the system of war is kept up, may provoke a confederation of nations to abolish it: and an European congress to patronize the progress of free government, and promote the civilization of nations with each other, is an event nearer in probability, than once were the revolutions and alliance of France and of America." You will easily conceive with what alarm passages of this kind would be read in England. In February, 1792, Mr. Paine proceeded to publish his second part of the Rights of Man; his attempt in this work was to show the people of England, that their government was bad, and that they ought to call a convention, and make a better: that nothing was more necessary, and nothing more easy.

I had originally made different extracts from his work with an intention of reading them, to exhibit to you his opinions; but I must omit them from want of time. You will find, if you consult his work, that he had persuaded himself, certainly that he meant to persuade others, that our constitution was an usurpation in its origin, unwise in its contrivances, mischievous in its effects, contrary to the rights of man, and in all its parts, a perfect nuisance. Thus to describe his doctrines, is not, I think at all to overstate them.

"I have now," concludes Mr. Paine, "gone through the whole of the subject, at least as far as it appears to me at present. It has been my intention for the five years I have been in Europe, to offer an address to the people of England on the subject of government, if the opportunity presented itself before I returned to America. Mr. Burke has thrown it in

my way, and I thank him,—on a certain occasion three years ago, I pressed him to propose a national convention to be fairly elected for the purpose of taking the state of the nation into consideration." You will easily suppose what Mr. Burke would think of the intellects, or of the designs of a man, who talked to him of calling a national convention. In a later publication Mr. Burke alludes to these schemes and pamphlets of Paine. "I have a great opinion of Thomas Paine, and of all his productions. I remember his having been one of the committee (in France he means) for forming one of their annual constitutions; I mean the admirable constitution of 1793, after having been a chamber counsel to the no less admirable constitution of 1791. This pious patriot has his eyes still directed to his dear native country, notwithstanding *her* ingratitude to so kind a benefactor. This outlaw of England, and lawgiver to France, is now, in secret probably, trying his hand again; and inviting us to him by making his constitution such, as may give his disciples in England some plausible pretext for going into the house, that he has opened. We have discovered, it seems, that all, which the boasted wisdom of our ancestors has laboured to bring to perfection for six or seven centuries, is nearly, or altogether, matched in six or seven days, at the leisure hours and sober intervals of Citizen Thomas Paine.

> 'But though the treacherous tapster Thomas,
> Hangs a new Angel two doors from us,
> As fine as dauber's hands can make it,
> In hopes that strangers may mistake it;
> We think it both a shame and sin
> To quit the good old Angel Inn*.'

Indeed, in this good old house, where every thing, at least, is well aired, I shall be content to put up my fatigued horses, and here take a bed for the long night, that begins to darken upon me."

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* This very happy quotation is taken from Swift's Stella's Birth-day, 1720. The poem begins thus:

> "All travellers at first incline
> Where'er they see the fairest sign;

But to proceed. While Mr. Paine was thus exciting the people of England to produce their physical strength, send deputies to a convention, and sweep away their old established government, with its feudal notions, and begin anew; different societies were in correspondence with the Convention and the Jacobins in Paris, and with popular clubs and societies in different parts of France. Their intentions, and recommendations seemed much of the same nature with those of Paine, and they continued all through the year 1792, particularly as the year advanced, considerably to alarm and agitate the public mind. In the Annual Register, you will find a sufficient specimen of their proceedings. The Revolution Society (e. g.) meaning our own Revolution in 1688, begins with Dr. Price, and an allusion to his sermon, so early as November 1789, the sermon that makes so distinguished a figure in the Reflections of Mr. Burke; at this period, they consider the glorious example given in France as tending to encourage other nations to assert the unalienable rights of mankind: half a year after, July 1790, the society rejoices in the complete success of the late glorious Revolution in France; a strong term this—"complete success," in July 1790: another half year, November 1790, and they "cannot refrain from quoting the noble sentiments of one of the speeches in the society at Nantes, nor from joining in the wish, that England and France, ever united, ever free, ever pacific, may be at once the model of nations, and the terror of tyrants:" and a year afterwards, in November 1791, their committee comes forward with exultation to congratulate the society, on the completion of the labours of the late virtuous National Assembly of France, quotes extracts from different addresses, received from societies in France, which addresses assured them that tyrants and despots were to fall, and that freedom and peace were to

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. And, if they find the chambers neat,
And like the liquor and the meat,
Will call again, and recommend
The Angel Inn to every friend.
What though the painting grows decayed,
The house will never lose its trade:
And though," &c.

be every where established; and conceiving, "that the society would never cease to desire revolutions till they should be unnecessary."

There is nothing said by this our Revolution Society, hostile to the constitution of our own country; but these proceedings are very remarkable, as coming from an association, then joined by some of the most intelligent and respectable men; and from this last circumstance, showing the general state of political enthusiasm at the moment, and how little was then comprehended of the real situation of France in November, 1791, or the imminent dangers, to which the cause of all rational freedom was there and everywhere exposed.

But this Revolution Society, as is always the case, was made up of heterogeneous materials; and in their correspondence, which was probably carried on by the most active and violent members, paragraphs appeared, which should have alarmed the more sober-minded, and no doubt did alarm those, who were not connected with them, the ministers of the country and the people of property and rank, who had all an opportunity of reading their proceedings, not only in the public prints, as they occurred, but when published by themselves, in the critical year of 1792. "The admiration," they say in April, 1791, "with which you, Frenchmen, have long beheld the British government, has, we believe, arisen from your having hitherto contemplated with more attention the *excellences* of our constitution, than its *defects*; a moderate portion of political freedom, and the existence of bearable oppressions appeared to you an enviable condition." Again. "Royal prerogatives," they say, "injurious to the public interest, a servile peerage, a rapacious and intolerant clergy, and corrupt representation, are grievances under which we suffer; but as you perhaps have profited from the example of our ancestors, so shall we from your late glorious and splendid actions." This was in August, 1791.

In the same strain they write in May, 1792, and in subsequent months; and instead of being checked and coming to a pause, they grow more and more violent with the increasing violence of the popular party in France. Besides the Revolution Society, another calling itself the Constitutional Society existed; and on the 28th of November, 1792,

after the overthrow of the French monarchy in August, deputies from this Constitutional Society assure the Convention, "that after the example which France has given, the science of revolutions will be rendered easy, and the progress of reason will be rapid. And that it would not be strange, if in a period, far short of what they should venture to predict, addresses of felicitation should cross the sea, to a national convention in England."

In a former address of the 9th, they had told the Convention, that it was their real opinion, that they spoke the sentiments of a great majority of the English nation, and that the people were wearied with imposture, and worn out with war. All this wild and reckless enthusiasm in the cause of liberty, exhibited by these popular societies in England was unfortunately loudly echoed back, and followed up in France by the famous decree of the Convention of November the 19th, 1792, passed by acclamation, "that they would grant fraternity and assistance to all people, who wished to recover their liberty;" and necessary orders were to be sent to her generals to give assistance to such people, and to defend those citizens, who had suffered, or may suffer in the cause of liberty." These proceedings of these different societies on each side the channel, the addresses, and the correspondent replies that immediately came from France, were not a little assisted in their effect by an Address to the People of England, that had been published in the spring of the year 1792, by the Society of the Friends of the People. This society was headed by Mr. Grey (now Lord Grey), by about thirty members of parliament, and consisted of those and other men of the first talents, character, and property: their object was a reform in parliament. They investigated the state of the representation, with the most extraordinary diligence and minuteness, and they produced a document, which has ever since been quoted and referred to by all the more ardent writers and reasoners on the subject, as showing, that the House of Commons is rather an image of the aristocracy, than of the people of England. An extension of the suffrage, and an abridgment of the duration of parliament, were their avowed, and (there can be no doubt) were their real objects, and nothing more; but the terms, in which they expressed

themselves, were somewhat vague. The situation of France seemed little to encourage any experiment on our own government; the same cry for reform was heard from other societies, very different from this, in their complexion and character; but even this association was not agreeable to Mr. Fox, and was never joined by him, and on the whole it cannot now be considered as either very judicious in its conception, or useful in its effects; for it mainly contributed to the general agitation and alarm, during a year (the year 1792) when the utmost calmness and sobriety of thought, in our ministers, and people of property, were necessary to the welfare of the state.

We must now turn our eyes to the other side of the picture; to the effects produced by all these elements of alarm; to the conduct of the people of property, and the government. Mr. Pitt was a popular and decisive minister; his royal master had never shown any great relish for new opinions, no tolerance even for the Whig party; and the government therefore, early in the year, addressed itself to the subject, and resolved to resist the popular opinions, that were circulating in the country, by every means in their power. You must look at their proclamation, issued at the close of May, 1792, against seditious meetings and publications; this was their first measure. Again. When the King of France was driven from the Tuileries on the 10th of August, they recalled our ambassador, which was in fact our protest against these proceedings, as putting an end to all government in France, that could be acknowledged by other nations. The sentiments of our cabinet were therefore clear in August, 1792. But in the months immediately following the horrid massacres of September occurred; the Duke of Brunswick was obliged to retreat; Dumourier rushed after him and overran the Netherlands, the decree of November was passed in the Convention, and those, who live *now*, can little conceive what was then the agitation and anxiety of the public mind in England.

On the 20th of November, was formed an Association at the Crown and Anchor in support of the Constitution; another, for the west end of the town, at the St. Alban's tavern. A declaration of the merchants, bankers, and traders of London, was very generally signed, dated 5th December. Resolutions,

and manifestoes were published by these societies, and everywhere circulated through the country; proclamations were issued to call out the militia, and to assemble parliament in December instead of January. Every note of alarm that was possible, was sounded by government; the stocks fell; a correspondence began between Lord Grenville and the French ambassador, that seemed likely to terminate in war; and the general expectation was, that some dreadful storm, perhaps some revolutionary convulsion, was approaching.

But the point to which you are now to direct your attention, is this: that the moment the government by their various strong measures announced their alarm, addresses flowed in from every possible quarter, manifesting the most steady attachment, and offering the most determined support to the constitution and government of these kingdoms; on the whole, very clearly showing, that however noisy and elated and presumptuous had been the clubs and societies, that corresponded with France, and however wide had been the circulation of Mr. Paine's publications, *still* that the mind of the great mass, and majority of the people of England, was in a sound and sane state; that they were properly impressed with the value of the blessings they already enjoyed, and not disposed to political experiments in search of new. This, I must repeat to you, is a main point for you to observe, since, if this were the case, the government of England was left at liberty to act as they thought best, with regard to France, and were under no necessity of rushing into a foreign war, in the usual vulgar and mistaken manner, for the sake, as it is superficially reasoned, of keeping peace at home; and I say this, because now comes before you one of the greatest questions that history presents to you, since the Revolution of 1688,—the question of peace or war with France at the close of the year 1792. Peace or war, with all the consequences of either system of policy.

On this question must rest the merits of Mr. Pitt, as a minister. He was a great commercial minister, a great financial minister; but inferior spirits may act in concerns like these: this can be no praise to Mr. Pitt. The present was a crisis in human affairs; millions of the existing generation were to be affected by his determination, and posterity to the

most distant ages; how then did he determine? What makes this question even still more interesting, is this: that the great rival statesman of these times (Mr. Fox), when the question came to be agitated, differed totally with Mr. Pitt on the measures to be pursued; and though an overpowering majority of the House of Commons and of the country, was with Mr. Pitt, it does not at all follow, that the historical student will now concur with them in opinion. In discussing a great political question, at a subsequent period, all the subordinate discussions, all that entangled the mind and impeded its progress to the real point at issue, must be cast aside. It is impossible to escape from them at the time: people in political questions generally take their side from their feelings and their interests, and then set about finding arguments to justify them in their decision: any arguments that are offered to them, and there is always a supply, will satisfy; the most exaggerated statements, the most incorrect assumptions, the most unfounded accusations of their opponents. The question is thus spread over a large surface; a worsted disputant on one point can always fly to another, and no distinct decision can be, or at least really *is*, attained. This sort of tumult and disorder, this sort of war against all propriety and common sense and the interests of the country at the time, cannot be escaped in a free country, and we may lament what it is in vain to hope to alter. Thus it was insisted at the time, that the French went to war with us; and I shall soon have to mention a publication by Dr. Marsh, which will fully exhibit to you the mode of reasoning that was employed. But to say this, is to lose the question entirely; the war was on our part, as on the part of the allied powers, a war against the Jacobins, or it was nothing; a war against furious and wicked men, who had got possession of the kingdom of France, and by their principles and armies were going to revolutionize Europe. It was in this point of view only, that it could be considered as a war of defence. The success of Mr. Paine's books in England, the success of Dumourier in the Netherlands, the fury and triumphs of the Jacobins in Paris, the proselytizing spirit of the French rulers, these were motives for war that were alone worthy to influence, or that alone did or could in reality have influenced, a man of

the capacity of Mr. Pitt: and to talk of insurrections at Yarmouth and Shields, or Dundee, that might have happened at any time; of the decree of November, and the opening of the Scheldt, that were matters of negotiation to be openly carried on by ministers, commissioned for the purpose—to insist on topics of this nature, was to make the war a war of underhand dealing, of pretexts and deceptions; pretexts and deceptions that were very properly trampled under foot, and cast back to the minister with scorn, by his magnanimous opponent Mr. Fox. This I conceive to be the fair view of the subject, the only view fit for an historical student now to entertain; and I must therefore hasten to mention to you such documents as will enable you to form your judgment in the shortest time, which so important a subject admits of.

The first book you are to turn to, is Marsh's Politics: this book was originally written in German, and published in February, 1799, six years after the crisis that is now before us. Dr. Marsh was then a resident at Leipsic, and had observed, that the most unfavourable notions were entertained all over Germany of the conduct of England. He therefore drew up the present work, and had the satisfaction to find, as he says in his preface, that it had not long appeared, when the first literary reviews in Germany pronounced, that the British government was completely rescued from the charges which had been laid to it, and that the origin as well as the continuance of the war must be wholly and solely ascribed to the mad ambition of the French rulers. You will find the work a full and elaborate enumeration of all the offences of the French Convention, and the rulers of France at the time; of all the indications their speeches and conduct exhibited of a spirit of aggrandizement and proselytism; and from the whole, at the end of his book, he considers himself as entitled to draw the following conclusions: "That a war with Great Britain had been resolved on, in the French cabinet, not only before the negotiation was ended, but even before it commenced; and the object of the executive council was not to produce a reconciliation, but to amuse the British government, and to deceive the nation, till the plan which had been laid for the destruction of the British empire, was fully ripe for execution." He goes on to observe,—"The mad ambition of

the French rulers, their determination to extirpate all kingly governments, and the confident expectation of insurrections in every part of Europe, aided by the necessity of finding employment for their turbulent armies, were their motives to war in general; and their firm belief, that the inhabitants of Great Britain were so disaffected to their government, that French assistance would induce them to an immediate revolt; the inconsiderable number of troops at that time in Great Britain, in comparison with those which could easily be spared from France; the forward state of the French navy; the persuasion that a landing on the British coast would be attended with no difficulty; and the immense advantage expected from the acquisition of the British wealth, commerce and marine, in the prosecution of their conquests on the continent; all these motives, added to the innate desire of crushing an ancient and formidable, but, at that time, despised rival, induced them to a war with Great Britain in particular." —And therefore finally, Dr. Marsh infers, "that it was a war of aggression, of injury, and of insult on the part of France, as well in the motives which gave it birth, as in the open declaration of it; and on the part of Britain, it was just and necessary, as being strictly a war of self defence."

To prove all this, it will probably strike you, is to prove a great deal, and it is not very creditable to arguments to appear to prove too much; yet such is the opinion, at which Dr. Marsh arrives by a consideration of all the circumstances and documents which he produces. And these you must therefore also meditate, and hereafter other documents and circumstances; but in the mean time, and in the first place, from the perusal of Dr. Marsh's book, your conclusion is to be, not I think Dr. Marsh's conclusion, but that the case before Mr. Pitt was one of no ordinary difficulty, arising from a most unexampled state of the world; such, as common maxims and common notions, those alone which Dr. Marsh brings to the subject, were totally inadequate to meet. Dr. Marsh's work is the statement of a diligent and able advocate, the statement of one side of the question only; nothing is said on the other; as such it may be very useful to you. I must therefore proceed to recommend to you other materials for the formation of your opinions; but, before I do so, I must

again state to you, what the question now before you really is. It is this—Whether we might not have avoided the war, without any stain on our honour; and whether, if this be found the case, peace was not our policy, as a better means of saving England from the proselytizing spirit of France, than war.

Now, with regard to the first part of the question, you must weigh well the correspondence that took place between Lord Grenville and Monsieur Chauvelin; you must then look at a very celebrated letter that was written by Mr. Fox to the electors of Westminster; and lastly, to these you must add the due consideration of the debates in parliament; they are necessary to the illustration of the documents, I have mentioned, and of the times: they are not long, and nothing can be more worthy of your attention. These are the three great means of forming your opinion. The student, when he reads the correspondence between Lord Grenville and M. Chauvelin, is to ask himself, which is the conciliating party, and which the haughty, the dictatorial, and therefore the hostile party; whether a great nation, like France, could be expected, in the face of the world, to humble itself before its great ancient rival and opponent, more than France did on this occasion, before the cabinet of England; and again, he is to ask himself, what possible answer can now be made to the representations of Mr. Fox's letter. I should not occupy you improperly if I was to endeavour to argue these points, because the tendency of what I should have to say would be to produce in you magnanimity, and a love of peace—few greater objects to me, than these; but I am now, as always, too limited in time, and you must be left to judge for yourselves. But you will be unable to judge, I must again repeat, if you do not read the debates; read, at least, those in the Commons. No reading can be proposed to you, so interesting, or so instructive: the subject, I must repeat, is the greatest that had occurred since the Revolution of 1688; and such men have never appeared, certainly have never appeared together, in the House of Commons, as were then seen there; Mr. Pitt and Mr. Burke on the one side, and Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan on the other. The speeches too, you will find, characteristic and sufficiently exemplifying the particular merits of the speakers; bare, and meagre, and inadequate, as

all reports must be; still, you will see, you will be enabled, to conceive at least, the merit of Mr. Pitt, the luminous statement, the imposing force, the long majestic march of his eloquence; and of Mr. Burke, the wide knowledge, the discursive wit and fancy, the philosophy, and, on this particular occasion, the irritated enthusiasm (a treacherous counsellor) of his overflowing mind. And on the other side, of Mr. Fox, you will see the simplicity, the open and generous feelings, his sincere, straight forward, powerful argumentation; and of Mr. Sheridan, the spirited, brilliant reasoning, and caustic wit dignified and recommended by the most honourable love of liberty—liberty, whether of England or of the world. All this might be a sufficient reward to you in point of entertainment, but much more than entertainment may be derived, edification of the most important kind. As on former occasions I most earnestly recommended to you the speeches of Mr. Burke on the American war, so do I now, the speeches of Mr. Fox, as showing you the manner (I concern not myself now with the opinions), but as showing you the manner in which a British statesman should think and feel. Nothing can be so admirable throughout, as the uprightness of the sentiment, and the generosity of the feeling; the disdain of every thing shifting, shuffling, and base; the contempt of all the expedients of low cunning, and vulgar policy; the magnanimous frankness, the simple wisdom, the elevated love of freedom, the benevolent love of peace, the detestation of all interference with the rights of others, however imposing the form, or plausible the pretext. Mr. Fox thought that the liberties of his own country were endangered by the measures, that the government were adopting, and sanctioning, under the influence of alarm; Mr. Pitt thought, there was no other chance of preserving those liberties. The student must decide. Mr. Fox thought that the liberties of England and of mankind would be at an end, if the allied powers succeeded in putting down the Revolution in France, and that it was for England on no account to participate in the shame and guilt of so atrocious an enterprise. Mr. Pitt was not disposed to admit, that we were going to be engaged in any such enterprise, but he maintained, that the proceedings and principles of the French leaders must be resisted. "They are then best resisted by peace,"

said Mr. Fox. "By war," said Mr. Pitt; "nor can we avoid it." "You use no proper means," rejoined Mr. Fox, "to avoid it." The student must judge between these distinguished statesmen; and if he takes the trouble I have proposed to him, he may.

A question now remains behind, which will certainly be asked by those, who accede to the war system of Mr. Pitt.—Could we ultimately have escaped the war? If not entered upon in the beginning of 1793, must it not have been entered into in 1794? Would the violence and revolutionary spirit of the Jacobins have left us any alternative? To this, the answer seems to be, that the uncertainty of human affairs is at all times great, and particularly during the period of the Revolution of France; that it could not be just to go to war upon presumptions like these; that the objection, supposes a better case hereafter; that this case must then be waited for; that no war can be lawful, till such last and best case arrives—the case of clear and strict necessity. War is not to be made sure of, but rather, the chances of peace. We were in no such situation as has sometimes occurred; when a weaker nation must anticipate war, against a stronger, even as the last and best hope of safety. Our resources were great, and we were in no fear.

It would be to partake of the party violence of the times, to accuse Mr. Pitt of being unfriendly to the liberties of mankind, still less to those of his own country; no doubt he thought he was acting in the defence of both; but the crisis was of the most singular nature, and his remedy was war; was this prudent? He meant to resist the new opinions; was war the best mode? to weaken the influence, and to destroy, if possible, the Jacobins; was war the best expedient? Did not war on the contrary throw every thing into the hands of the Jacobins, who could thus identify their power and their measures with the defence of the country? He meant to support our establishments; was war the best means of doing so? What danger could they run, as the people had shown their attachment to them, but from the increase of the national debt? There might be difficulty in the case from the extraordinary nature of the times, from the folly and fury of the French Convention, passing decrees by

acclamation, amid the uproar of a revolution, and the intoxication of success on the repulse of an invading enemy; but was he to accommodate himself to such extraordinary times or not, for the sake of peace, and of such considerations, as we have mentioned? Was he not, as Mr. Fox advised, at least to negotiate; at least, to state our wrongs, and demand redress from those who were alone competent to afford it? Is it any answer to say with Dr. Marsh, that this would have been to betray fear, and could not have been successful; or with Mr. Burke, and the furious people of these times, that it was impossible to negotiate with ruffians and assassins? These are the questions which the student must ask himself, and Mr. Pitt's fame as a minister must depend on the answer. That his intentions were the best, there can be no doubt; but this is not sufficient. Mr. Pitt has been celebrated as the pilot that weathered the storm; but the storm is the national debt, and is not weathered. In great and perilous conjunctures, ill fares it with a land, when its rulers are men, accustomed to give the law, with haughtiness in their temperament, and eloquence in their tongue; conscious of commanding talents, with all the imposing merits, but all the dangerous faults of genius. "Nullum numen abest, si sit prudentia."—Prudence is the one thing needful in a minister. Walpole in our own country, Washington in America, men of calm minds and circumspect understandings; this is the description of men, that can alone be intrusted, on critical occasions, with the interests of their own country and the welfare of mankind; the patrons of mild government, the votaries of peace.

After all, it is possible, that war might have been avoided by both countries, if the popular party in France (that guilty party), could but have behaved with any tolerable moderation, and justice to their fallen monarch. The Duke of Brunswick's invasion and manifestoes, no doubt, were most unfortunate. But the allied powers had been driven back; the Convention had assembled, and seized and administered all the authority of the state; the supporters of the old opinions had been overpowered, had been taught to respect the convulsive strength, at least, of the wild democracy of France; and if a pause could but have *now* ensued, if the Jacobins could but have been now wise and magnanimous and just, or if the Giron-

dists could but have prevailed, and if the king in consequence, and the royal family had but been dismissed (to America for instance), it is possible that France and Europe might have been saved a long and dreadful series of the most appalling calamities;—it is possible, but it was *no longer possible*, when the Convention had not only brought to trial their benevolent and well-intentioned monarch (for such virtues were never denied him) but had even, with such intolerable cruelty, deliberately shed his blood; then, indeed, no terms were any longer to be kept with the new opinions, or their defenders. That a civil war would ensue in France (it did break out in La Vendée) was the general expectation; and even in England, such was the alarm created by the proselytizing spirit of the new opinions, such the indignation, detestation, and horror naturally produced by the 10th of August, the massacres of September, and above all, by the execution of the king, that all that could be done, by the popular party, Mr. Fox at their head, was to attempt, and, in vain attempt, to keep the two countries from going to war, and maintain, if possible, the existence of the free spirit, and free maxims of the constitution of England. Even to make these attempts at all, required all the exertions of the most transcendent eloquence, and the most resolute devotion to the general principles of freedom, amidst the impatient and indignant hatred of the very name of freedom that now generally prevailed, and that naturally resulted from the long witnessed licentiousness of the mobs of Paris, and from the unprincipled reasonings and atrocious conduct of this upstart and merciless Convention. "With whom shall we treat?" was the question triumphantly asked, when peace with France was proposed; "ruffians, banditti in their cave," were the only appellations that could be found for her rulers; and all Europe, as in the times of the crusades, seemed now loosened from its hold, and ready to precipitate itself upon this one detested country. The leaders of the Revolution in France had therefore to defend their revolution against the world; the European governments were resolved, if possible, to put the Revolution down. Each party had their appropriate means of attack and defence; but the great calamity was, that the dispute, like other disputes among mankind, was to be decided by arms. The Revolutionists

produced every where their doctrines, "liberty," "equality," "the rights of man," "the abuses of government," "the miseries of mankind," which were all imputed to the tyranny of their rulers, but they also produced their armies. Their opponents in like manner, while they insisted in their manifestoes and reasonings, upon the wild anarchy and horrors that had followed the success of the new opinions in France, on the necessity of order, of the maintenance of the existing institutions of society, the distinctions of ranks, and the rights of property, omitted not to draw out their armies also, to enforce *their* arguments; and no crisis in the affairs of mankind, since the attack of the Roman empire by the northern nations, could ever be likened to the crisis which now ensued; for even the followers of Mahomet with their Koran, and their sword, as they came with an adverse faith, and uncongenial habits and manners, were not nearly such formidable opponents to the established governments and institutions of Europe, as were the French commissioners and generals, with irresistible military science, their innumerable hosts of soldiers totally reckless and prodigal of life, and their doctrines of liberty and equality; (war to the palace, and peace to the cottage), so animating to themselves, so terrifying to their opponents, so plausible, so exciting, and so flattering whereever they turned, to all the most deeply rooted prejudices and passions of the lower orders of society. This then is the contest, this the crisis, which you are now to consider. It was so from the *first* in the opinion of Mr. Burke; undoubtedly it became so from the moment that the 10th of August, the invasion of the Duke of Brunswick, the massacres of September, and the execution of the king, had so entirely infuriated the contending parties, as to leave no sentiment in their bosoms, but those of mutual indignation, disgust, and terror of the success of each other, and to render all counsels of moderation and peace, in their own opinion, at least, impossible.

LECTURE XXXVI.

GODWIN.

THE French Revolution was a great crisis in the affairs of the world. On this crisis of the world we must dwell a little longer; we must endeavour to explain it a little further. It is in retrospects of this nature, that the edification of history consists. This crisis was perceived by Mr. Burke very early. This was his merit, and a very extraordinary merit, and I have stated it to you. Whether he took the most skilful method to medicine the world is another question; but the situation of the world and its diseases he saw, he saw clearly; he was a political and he was a moral prophet: every thing appeared to him to have taken a wrong direction in politics, in manners, and in morals. The few extracts that I have made from his Reflections will show this very sufficiently. He published this work in the autumn of 1790, and every event and every appearance answered, and long continued to answer, his predictions. The new opinions prevailed; and as they more and more prevailed, they more and more departed from the old. In politics the great doctrine of the sovereignty of the people, in morals the great principle of utility, was each more and more misunderstood and caricatured; till at last, about the period we are now considering, there seemed no bounds to the speculations, or rather the aberrations, of the human mind. In my lecture on the Reign of Louis XV., I mentioned to you the writings of Voltaire, of Montesquieu, of the authors of the Encyclopédie, and above all, of Rousseau; then those again of the materialists; finally, those of immoral and irreligious men, authors of the lowest description. All these, assisted by political circumstances, had produced their full effect in France on the minds and hearts of the generation of men, that were ready in all the vigour of rising manhood to take a part in

the Revolution, when it broke out in 1789. Whatever is felt in France soon circulates through Europe, and it was afterwards found, that wherever the French armies went, their work seemed already done; their admirers were ready, and a large party prepared to receive their new doctrines with acclamations and applause. Every thing was more or less in a state of restlessness and dissatisfaction, of distrust and alarm, in the old governments. How this state of things was to be remedied by those who wished well to mankind, is not the question I am now discussing; I am only endeavouring to state the facts of the case; to impress you with the particular nature of it; to call your attention to the extravagance of speculation of every kind, that existed at this period; to the manner in which all the ordinary notions which belong to men in society were attacked and shaken; and I must for a moment anticipate my main subject, and announce to you that there was no speculation however wild, no experiment however daring, that you will not have immediately to see really tried, and put in practice, when you come to consider the history of the Revolution in France, during the period that was denominated the Reign of Terror.

I would wish, I say, to afford you some general notion, for the present (you must follow up the subject for yourselves hereafter), of this part of the history of the Revolution, and indeed of the history of the human mind; of the sort of mental intoxication that prevailed among those, who should have been the guides and instructors of mankind. And looking round for this purpose, I shall select from the rest, as a memorable specimen of the whole, the once celebrated work of Mr. Godwin. The influence of the work I can myself remember. In any ordinary state of the world it must have fallen lifeless from the press: highly metaphysical, continually running into general abstractions, into disquisitions, never ending still beginning, nothing was ever less fitted to attract a reader, than this repulsive "Inquiry concerning Political Justice;" and if the state had not been out of joint, most assuredly scarce a reader would have been found. Some years after, when the success of the work had been established, Mr. Burke was asked whether he had seen it. "Why, yes, I have seen it," was the answer, "and a mighty stupid

looking book it is." No two words could better have described it. The late excellent Sir Samuel Romilly, who had then leisure to read every thing, told a friend who had never heard of it, that there had just appeared a book, by far the most absurd that had ever come within his knowledge (this was the work of Godwin); and Mrs. Barbauld, who at length, by the progress of its doctrines, was compelled to look at it, declared, that what was good in the book was chiefly taken from Hume; and that it was "borrowed sense, and original nonsense." The work however prospered; this original nonsense was then in great request, and at a high premium; Mr. Godwin had his admirers, had his school; there were Godwinians in those days, as well as Whigs and Tories, more particularly in the inns of court, and among the young lawyers; and this borrower of sense, and retailer of nonsense, this dreamer of dreams, and seer of visions, was suddenly transformed from a dissenting clergyman, dissatisfied with his profession, and unknowing and unknown, into a person pointed at, as he walked in the metropolis of England, as a disturber of empires, and a reformer of the world.

The first edition was printed on the 7th of January, 1793. "Political inquiry," says the preface, "has long held a principal place in the writer's attention; it is now twelve years since he became satisfied, that monarchy was a species of government essentially corrupt." This conviction, Mr. Godwin says that he owed to Swift, and the Latin historians; and great additional instruction, he said, had been derived from the most considerable French writers, on the nature of man, from the "Système de la Nature," Rousseau, and Helvetius. Of the desirableness of a government in the utmost degree simple, he was not made fully aware, but by ideas, suggested by the French Revolution. To the same event he owed the determination of mind which gave existence to this work. "It is the fortune of the present work," says Mr. Godwin in his conclusion, "to appear before a public that is panic-struck, and impressed with the most dreadful apprehension respecting such doctrines as are here delivered. But it is the property of truth to be fearless, and to prove victorious over every adversary."

The second edition appeared on October 29th, 1795. "The

reception of the work," says the new preface, "had been such as to exceed what the author had dared to promise himself. Its principles and its reasonings had obtained the attention of the public to a considerable extent. Material variations of deduction and statement would now be found; out of eight books, the four first, and last, might be said to be re-written; but that the spirit and great outlines of the work remained, he believed, untouched; that it had been treated, by some persons, as of a seditious and inflammatory nature, but that this was probably an aspersion; that he persuaded himself, whatever might be the events, with which the present crisis of human history should be distinguished, that the effect of his writings would be found favourable to the increase and preservation of general kindness and benevolence."

Now I am far from saying that Mr. Godwin's intentions might not be good: there are many passages in his work, one more especially about revolutions, that counsel moderation, that are temperate and just; but the question is, whether his writings were, in their end and practical meaning, reasonable; whether their mistakes were not likely to have a very destructive influence on the best interests of society.

It is no longer possible, I think, to read the book: the world is now in a more settled state, and people no longer make "inquiries concerning political justice, and its influence on morals and happiness," according to the title of his book, I will therefore endeavour to give you some general notion of the leading principles of the work, in the most concise manner I am able.

This sentence was written many years ago, like the rest of the lectures I am now delivering; but as I mentioned in my introductory lecture to this course, I have lived to see all the doctrines of Godwin revived. They are the same as those which now infest the world, and disgrace the human understanding, delivered by Mr. Owen, by the Chartists, the St. Simonians, &c. &c., and by many other political theorists, in these kingdoms, in France, on the continent, and the "Workees," as they call themselves, in America.

Mr. Godwin conceives, "that the excellences and defects of the human character are not derived from causes, beyond the reach of ingenuity to modify and correct." (page 46.)

What then is his receipt? It is this—He lays it down, "that sound reasoning and truth, when adequately communicated, must always be victorious over error; that sound reasoning and truth are capable of being so communicated; that truth is omnipotent; that therefore the vices and moral weakness of man are not invincible; that man is perfectible, or, in other words, that he is susceptible of perpetual improvement." These are the propositions, the splendid propositions, expressed in his own words, at which Mr. Godwin arrives in the course of the five first chapters of his second and corrected edition, in the course of the first ninety-six pages; that man is perfectible by the influence of reasoning and truth! It may seem astonishing, that any man, who had ever interchanged three words with his fellow creatures, could think of committing such propositions to paper.

The ground, however, is now prepared, and it only remains that the edifice of truth should be erected.

The next positions then are, that all politics are founded on morals, which is very true, and that justice is a general appellation for all moral duty. Why should I pardon (says Mr. Godwin) this criminal, remunerate this favour, abstain from this indulgence? Because I shall benefit the whole; therefore to do it is just, and to forbear it is unjust." Mr. Godwin's theory therefore was, that we were to do good from a sense of the injustice of doing otherwise. Utility was the criterion, a sense of propriety the motive.

Now long before, Mr. Hume and others had laid down the doctrine of utility, the system of benevolence, and long before, Dr. Clarke and others had laid down the sense of duty, that arose from the different relations of things, the intuitions of propriety, the rule of right: these had been among the doctrines of the ancient philosophers, as well as the modern. Theories of this kind were the natural conclusions of the human mind, when men began to reason at all on such subjects, and there was here in Mr. Godwin's work nothing new. "We know (said Mr. Burke) that we have made no discoveries, and we think that no discoveries are to be made in morality," and certainly it would have been somewhat strange, if men had been living in society from the beginning of the world, without knowing how to conduct themselves to

each other (for such is the province of morality), ignorant in this essential respect, till they were to receive the necessary instructions from Mr. Godwin or any other philosopher, at the close of the 18th century of the Christian era. This would have been a very remarkable dispensation in the great Creator of the universe, and very different from the manner, in which he has provided every other creature that lives and moves, with the intuitions and instincts, that are necessary to its existence, and conducive to its well being. All this must surely be acknowledged. Nothing new could therefore be well expected from Mr. Godwin on the subject of morality. Still however something new was necessary; Mrs. Barbauld's borrowed sense could not be sufficient, unless the original nonsense was also produced; and this therefore was done in the following manner. For instance, every one was aware that all philosophers, whether ancient or modern, from whatever theory they began, had ended always in recommending the same actions. No one had ever said, that men were not to be grateful for kindness, or to keep their promises, or to attend above all things, and in the first place, to the great affections and charities of human life. Here then was an opportunity of something new and something well adapted to the revolutionary state of the world, at the time existing; for all this established morality might be resisted and denied: and there was then something produced—new, remarkably new, and fitted for the renovation of the world, and evidently very valuable. Mr. Godwin therefore put the great moral duties into his metaphysical crucible, and the results were every thing that could strike the speculator by its novelty, or the revolutionist by its convenience. They were all found to evaporate and disappear, and in the following manner.

Every thing, you may remember, was, according to Mr. Godwin, to be referred to justice.

"But justice," says Mr. Godwin, "is no respecter of persons;" very well. The illustrious Bishop of Cambray, for instance, was of more worth than his valet, and there are few of us, says Mr. Godwin, that would hesitate to pronounce, if his palace were in flames, which of the two should be preserved. But again.

"Suppose I had been myself the valet," says Mr. Godwin, "I ought to have chosen to die, rather than Fénélon should have died. To have done otherwise would have been a breach of justice." Somewhat alarming this, but let it pass—very well. —Again. "Suppose" says Mr. Godwin, "the valet had been my brother, or my father, or my benefactor, this would not alter the truth of the proposition: the life of Fénélon would still be more valuable than that of the valet; and justice, pure, unadulterated justice, would still have preferred that which was most valuable; justice would have taught me to save the life of Fénélon at the expense of the other. What magic is there in the pronoun '*my*,' to overturn the decision of impartial truth? My brother, or my father, may be a fool or a profligate, malicious, lying, or dishonest. If they be, of what consequence is it that they are mine?"

This then was the result that was wanted, filial duty at an end. The poor father was to see his son helping another person out of the flames, and be left himself to perish, all upon the principle of justice, the foundation of all morality.

Mathematicians, when their reasonings conduct them to some unnatural position, that the greater is equal to the less, or the less to the greater, immediately stop short, produce their phrase, "quod est absurdum," and think it high time to begin again. The premises are wrong, or the reasoning is wrong, or something or other is wrong. But not so Mr. Godwin.

"But to my father," he continues, "I am indebted for existence, and he supported me in the helplessness of infancy. Every voluntary benefit entitles the bestower to some kindness and retribution." Certainly these notions, thus produced by Mr. Godwin, are notions generally received. But now for the crucible. "My benefactor," says Mr. Godwin, "ought to be esteemed, not because he bestowed a benefit on me, but because he bestowed it on a human being. His desert will be in exact proportion to the degree, in which that human being was worthy of the distinction conferred. Thus every view of the subject," says he, "brings us back to the consideration of my neighbour's moral worth, and his importance to the general weal, as the only standard to determine the treatment to which he is entitled. Gratitude, therefore, if by

gratitude we understand a sentiment of preference, which I entertain towards another, upon the ground of my having been the subject of his benefits, is no part either of justice or virtue." No indeed! This was again something new; the common affections of parent and child were first demolished; and now gratitude also. If you read this Inquiry, you will see that the obligation of promises followed next, and so of the rest.

I have already observed to you, that the public good can never be accomplished in this manner; and that admitting the principle of utility, that is, the system of benevolence, such universal happiness can only be approximated by an attention to the common maxims of life and the common feelings of our nature; but the unexpected logic by which Mr. Godwin reasons away the obligation that exists between parent and child reminds me of a passage in Tristram Shandy.

In that most entertaining performance, the lawyers are supposed discussing a law question before Yorick and my Uncle Toby. "In the reign of Edward VI.," says one of them, "in the famous case, commonly known by the name of the Duke of Suffolk's case, as it was a great cause, and much depending upon its issue, and as many causes of great property were likely to be decided in times to come, by the precedent to be then made, the most learned, as well in the laws of this realm, as in the civil law, were consulted together; and not only the temporal lawyers, but the church lawyers, the jurisconsulti, the jurisprudentes, the civilians, the advocates, the commissaries, the judges of the consistory and prerogative courts of Canterbury and York, with the Master of the Faculties, were all unanimously of opinion, that the mother, the Duchess of Suffolk, was not of kin to her child.

"'And what, said the Duchess of Suffolk to it?' said my Uncle Toby. This was an unexpected question, it seems; and as nothing could be made of it, the lawyers voted the order of the day, and went on with their law argument: this, when they had finished it, left the Duchess, as before, not of kin to her own child.

"'Let the learned say what they will, there must certainly, (quoth my Uncle Toby) be some manner of consanguinity between the Duchess of Suffolk and her son.'

"'The vulgar are of the same opinion to this hour' (quoth Yorick)."

In like manner the matrons of England would perhaps, like my Uncle Toby, have been a little startled at the philosophy of Mr Godwin, that there was no connexion between them and their children; but this would have been of no consequence, for he would have classed them with the vulgar, in the words, literally taken, of Yorick, and have reasoned on.

It is observable how much the poet Cowper differs from Mr. Godwin with respect to the magic of words and pronouns. What magic in the word "my?" says Mr. Godwin. You remember Cowper's poem to Mrs. Unwin in the decline of life:

> "Thy spirits have a fainter flow,
> I see thee daily weaker grow,
> 'Twas my distress that brought thee low,
> My Mary."

And he goes on with words and pronouns, ending as he supposes each stanza in the most emphatic manner, with the words "My Mary," for twenty stanzas running; and that Cowper was right, is clear, from the thousand imitations of his poem, by which it was immediately followed.

But Cowper was a moralist of the old school, and a patriot of the old school also.

> "England! with all thy faults I love thee still,
> For thou art still my country.——"

I will offer one illustration more of the reasonings of Mr. Godwin.

It is related of Dr. Johnson by Mrs. Piozzi, that he wished to visit his poor old mother, who was dangerously ill at Lichfield, but had no means of conveyance. He therefore wrote his Rasselas, took it to the bookseller, and with the money he received, paid for his place in the first stage coach, and proceeded to Lichfield. But what a mistake was here committed by the good Doctor! The great moralist (but of the old school) went to honour his mother, when perhaps there was none else to honour her; went to cheer her in that stage of existence, when to cheer her, no other sight but that of her

son would probably have availed; went to offer her every testimony of his gratitude, his reverence, his duty, and his love; but why? Because he was impelled to do so by every instinct, and feeling, and precept, that had been given him by his Almighty Master, that had been intertwined and made a part of his nature, by that benevolent Creator, who had thus in his instance, as in every other, provided, according to the circumstances of the case, for the comfort, the happiness, and the support of all sentient existence.

But what a mistake, I say, was here committed! Our great moralist, by a more sound philosophy, should have been brought back to the consideration of his mother's moral worth, and her importance to the general weal, as the only standard to determine the treatment to which she was entitled. He should have turned from a poor, old, helpless, insignificant creature, "in corners thrown," not worth the chair she sat upon, with which at least a fire could be made for the useful purposes of life; he might have sent her money indeed, or a warm garment to cover her, if, after diligent search in the streets of London, he had found no other more worthy of his present; not before. But far from thinking of an useless, tottering wreck of humanity like this, he should have turned to the consideration of the value of his own time, which was not to be thrown away upon his old mother; to the consideration of the powers of his own understanding, the effects that he could himself produce upon society by his publications; that he was to enlighten mankind, free them from error, establish truth; that this was a debt of justice he owed them; that the old woman was indeed his mother, but that there was no magic in pronouns and in words, in "my" and in "mother," and that justice is no respecter of persons. Unhappily for poor Dr. Johnson, and most fortunately for his mother, these discoveries had not then been made; he went blundering on in the ancient manner; like Joseph of old, he asked, "Does my mother yet live?" and probably he still farther imitated the same stupid and unenlightened victim of nature and of duty; for Joseph, the pious son of ages long gone by, for Joseph, we are told, "fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him." But this was ancient morality, not the newly discovered morality of Mr. Godwin.

In a former lecture I have mentioned, and I must now again repeat to you the leading points of the subject before us; that, in short, the principle of utility need not be denied, for the very principle of utility itself will show, that the great leading affections, and charities, and ordinary duties of human life, must be cherished and maintained; that it is thus that the happiness of mankind will be best promoted; and that if ever they *stand* in *opposition* to our love of our country, or our love for mankind, the case will be of a very extraordinary nature—will be an exception to general rules, and must be treated like every other exception. But at the time of the appearance of Godwin's book, the speculating part of the community, that is, the younger part, were in the main acquainted with no other book of morals, but the justly celebrated work of Paley; and there they read, that every thing was to be referred to utility, and that whatever was expedient, was right.

No provision had been sufficiently made for the case now before the public, by Paley, though it had been by Hume, in two very remarkable notes to his Treatise on Morals; but who ever dreamt of consulting Hume, for any purposes but those of scepticism? an author known to the public more by the objectionable than the valuable part of his writings, his Morals, and his Political Economy. In the mean time, no other principle, as far as any principle was heard at all, resounded in France, but the love of our country, the public good, utility, and the expediency of new institutions and opinions. Indeed, these doctrines, as I have before observed, that merged every other consideration in a regard to the public good, and to utility, were very convenient to those men, who were animated with new ideas, and intent upon altering every thing according to their own new notions of expediency.

In England, indeed, these doctrines appeared in a very speculative state, in the metaphysical work, for instance, of Mr. Godwin; still they had considerable success, with the young men particularly; and whilst they animated the conversation, and occupied the controversial powers, of the rising generation in our own island, they not a little disturbed and teased, and indeed sometimes enraged, the older members of

our society, who could not deny the premises, the principle of utility, but stood totally embarrassed, when they saw the consequences into which they were driven, by the triumphant logic of their youthful instructors, the disciples of Mr. Godwin. And now for another word of illustration: Bishop Berkeley sent his book to Mr. Whiston; the famous work in which he proved the nonexistence of matter. "I went to Dr. Clark," says Whiston, "telling him, that I was not a metaphysician, and therefore unable to answer Mr. Berkeley's subtle premises, though I did not at all believe his absurd conclusions, the nonexistence of matter. I therefore desired that he, who was deep in such subtleties, would answer him."

And such was not a little the situation of many of our grave and good men, at this particular period; they knew not what to make of the premises, the premises as they supposed of Paley, and the system, as they supposed, of benevolence, or how to deny them; but they could clearly see and feel the absurdity of the conclusions, that appeared to be legitimately deduced from them.

The work, however, of Mr. Godwin made other inroads besides those, into the province of morality; not a spot in the whole region of politics escaped, and the book was revolutionary from the first page to the last. The metaphysical crucible to which I have before alluded, was eternally made use of, and every subject was thrown into it; law, property, government, whatever could be esteemed of importance to society; and if the result was not always exactly what was wanted, it was nearly so, sufficiently so, to enable Mr. Godwin to hasten on to another subject, and to leave those who had witnessed the experiment on the last subject, expecting another, and staring and puzzled, and silent at least, if not properly convinced. Those who can be at the pains to look attentively at this Inquiry concerning Political Justice, may be amused to observe, how many more objections the author raises, as he goes along, to his own doctrines, than he can properly answer; in what a plausible manner he *appears* to answer them, when he does *not* answer them; how often he escapes from the contest in appearance unhurt, by bringing up to the charge, a fresh abstraction, and one abstraction after another, till the reader loses all his natural acuteness and common sense, from

the mere over exercise and fatigue of his faculties, and is ready to acquiesce in anything, however unexpected or strange, if he may but be allowed to hasten on and take his chance, in the pages that follow. Nor is this an uncommon practice with theorists and speculative writers, when they wage war with the common notions of mankind; the natural conclusions of the understanding present themselves; they must be disposed of, and what can be done? While the subject remains in an intelligible state, the argument will go against them. Metaphysics therefore are called in,—a never failing resource—one abstraction after another; dust is raised, the light of day obscured, and they then walk off, in a kind of triumphant manner in the midst of the cloud.

As I have already mentioned, you are not likely now to read Mr. Godwin; but the success of his doctrines is a feature of the times; and to know what they were, is to know the history of the minds of others, and may be a warning to your own.

Such remarks as I have now made, I will endeavour to illustrate, by offering you some description of the manner in which Mr. Godwin treats the subject of property;—one, the most important,—the key-stone of society. Now it is very perplexing and wearisome to follow him through his observations, in the natural expectation, that he will state distinctly what his doctrine is.

It seems, however, in a word, to be of the following nature. Property is held by one man, and though, to a degree unjust in itself, it is not just in his neighbours to deprive him; property is therefore secure. Page after page, indeed, is filled with invectives against the rich, and with statements of the evils that arise from the accumulation of property; but, at last, he lays it down (vol. ii. p. 68), that it appears with the utmost evidence, that when the subject of wealth shall be understood, and correct ideas respecting it familiarized to the mind, the present disparity of conditions will subside, by a gradual and incessant progress, into its true level. "The change we are here contemplating," he continues, "consists in the disposition of every member of the community voluntarily to resign that which would be productive of more benefit and pleasure when possessed by his neighbours than when

occupied by himself. Undoubtedly," he subjoins, "this state of society is remote from the modes of thinking and acting that at present prevail. A long period of time must elapse before it can be brought into practice. All we have been attempting," he says, "to establish, is, that such a state of society is agreeable to reason, and prescribed by justice; and, that of consequence, the progress of science and political truth among mankind, is closely connected with its introduction.

"The inherent tendency of intellect is to improvement. If, therefore, this inherent tendency is suffered to operate, and no concussion of nature, or inundation of barbarism, arrest its course, the state of society we have been describing, must, at some time, arrive." (Vol. ii. p. 469.) Such is the drift of his reasoning on the subject of property. But here, I must observe, that an euthanasia,—a happy extinction, like this, of property, and its evils, in itself sufficiently visionary, is not likely to be forwarded, and men are not likely to be converted into the voluntary and disinterested benefactors of each other by such revolutionary sentences as are interspersed amongst his pages, while discussing the subject. For instance (p. 428), "that every man may calculate," (and this sentence is repeated in a subsequent page,) "that every man may calculate, in every glass of wine he drinks, and every ornament he annexes to his person, how many individuals have been condemned to slavery and sweat, incessant drudgery, unwholesome food, continual hardships, deplorable ignorance, and brutal insensibility, that he may be supplied with these luxuries." "It is a gross imposition," he says, "that men are accustomed to put on themselves, when they talk of the property bequeathed to them by their ancestors. The property is produced by the daily labour of men, who are now in existence. All that their ancestors bequeathed to them was a mouldy patent, which they show as a right to extort from their neighbours what the labour of those neighbours has produced."

The fruitful source of crimes, he says, consists in this circumstance;—"One man's possessing in abundance, that, of which another man is destitute. Man must cease to have a sense of justice before he can clearly and fully approve this mixed scene of superfluity and want." And again, "Ambition spreads bloodshed, and calamity, and conquest over the face

of the earth. But the passion itself, as well as the means of gratifying it, is the produce of the prevailing administration of property. War, in all its aggravations, is the growth of unequal property."

After stating, in this extravagant way, after the manner of Rousseau, what he conceives to be the evils arising from property, what remedy, what alteration does he propose? It is this. "From the sketch that has been given," says he, "it seems by no means impossible, that the labour of every twentieth man in the community would be sufficient to supply to the rest, all the absolute necessaries of life. If then, this labour, instead of being performed by so small a number, were amicably divided among the whole, it would occupy the twentieth part of every man's time. Who is there that would shrink from this degree of industry? Is it possible to contemplate this fair and generous picture of independence and virtue, when every man would have ample leisure for the noblest energies of mind, without feeling our very souls refreshed with admiration and hope?"

I shall at present leave these idle fantasies, to take their chance with you: I shall again refer to them before I conclude my lecture, when I can number them up with others; and in the mean time go on to observe, that theories of this kind were matters of constant occurrence in the conversation of society, both in France and England, at this period of the world which we are now considering; I mean not amongst the old, but amongst the more young and active members of society. The leaders of the Revolution in France were almost all young men: the great dreamer that had thrown his influence over the world, was Rousseau. And in moral and political evil the phenomena are so great, that any wild declaimer of this description can never want an audience; nor, if the times are favourable, a school. He can always appeal to sensibilities that are inextricably interwoven into the constitution of every reflecting man. No wonder Rousseau and Mr. Godwin succeeded. Observe how their doctrines approach even the reasonings of Mr. Burke, while he is employed in the reprobation of the unlicensed violence of the earliest periods of the Revolution, the destruction of the monastic institutions.

"These monks," he says, "are as usefully employed, as if

they worked from dawn to dark in the innumerable servile, degrading, unseemly, unmanly, and often most unwholesome occupations, to which, by the social economy, so many wretches are inevitably doomed. If it were not generally pernicious to disturb the natural course of things and to impede in any degree the great wheel of circulation, which is turned by the strangely directed labours of these unhappy people, I should be infinitely more inclined to rescue them from their miserable industry, than violently to disturb the tranquil repose of monastic quietude.

"Humanity, and perhaps policy, might better justify me in the one than in the other. It is a subject on which I have often reflected, and never reflected without feeling from it. I am sure that no consideration, except the necessity of submitting to the yoke of luxury and the despotism of fancy, who, in their own imperious way, *will* distribute the surplus product of the soil, can justify the toleration of such trades and employments in a well regulated state."

Here you see the man of feeling, as sensitive as Mr. Godwin or Rousseau himself; but you see the philosopher also, and the man of sense, who is aware of the general laws of Providence under which he lives, who is conscious that he must submit to them, and who never thinks for a moment of new modelling the world in a manner not agreeable to the higher wisdom and great mysterious designs of the Almighty Creator. But to return.

I must request you to be patient whilst I occupy your time in this manner with the work of Mr. Godwin. He is one of a class, and as such I fix upon him; of a class that exists at this moment; and, open or concealed, will always exist. He was probably deceived himself, though a deceiver of others; and if he had lived in France, would have caused the destruction of his fellow creatures, and perished himself.

Such reasoners, I must repeat, will ever be found in every country when the government is free; such declaimers in the cause of liberty, as they suppose, and the cause of human happiness.

All through these lectures it has been my humble effort to save you from the influence of men like these; because the principles of civil and religious liberty, and the sentiments of

benevolence, are the most honourable and the most noble, the best, and, no doubt, the most acceptable to the Almighty Master, that can animate your bosoms, and actuate your conduct. But, at the same time, they are feelings that, from their very nature, may lead astray. And you must read, mark, learn, and understand; that they may be a blessing to yourselves and your fellow creatures; not a wild fire, to hurry you, you know not whither, to plunge you in disappointment, and the community in ruin.

But to return to Mr. Godwin. As the common charities and duties of life were to disappear in Mr. Godwin's ideal system, new notions of labour and of property to arise, and new views to be entertained of education, law, titles, distinctions, and, indeed, every thing political and human, (I cannot now enter such discussions with which his work abounds), it could not be supposed that the institution of marriage would escape.

"Marriage," says he, "as now understood, is a monopoly, and the worst of monopolies. So long as I seek, by despotic and artificial means, to engross a woman to myself, and to prohibit my neighbour from proving his superior claim, I am guilty of the most odious selfishness. As long as this state of society continues, philanthropy will be crossed and checked in a thousand ways; and the still augmenting stream of abuse will continue to flow." Such are the premises in discussing the subject. After a couple of pages of abstract reasoning, quite necessary, as you may suppose, Mr. Godwin reaches the conclusion, "that, certainly, no ties ought to be imposed on either party, preventing them from quitting the attachment whenever their judgment directed them to quit it." And after another page, he observes, as he leaves the subject, "I shall assiduously cultivate the intercourse of that woman, whose accomplishments strike me in the most powerful manner. But it may happen," he adds, "that other men will feel for her the same preference that I do; this will create no difficulty." No, indeed! certainly it appears one; but it requires from Mr. Godwin only a couple of sentences, or rather of ridiculous assertions, and it is then disposed of. "We may all," he says, "enjoy her conversation; and we shall be wise enough to consider the sexual commerce as

a comparatively trivial object." What a pity that Mr. Godwin did not live at an earlier period, that, by proper representations to Menelaus and the Greeks, he might have prevented the Trojan war!

These reveries, you will observe, are at the close of the work: they could not well have been produced till the reader had been familiarised with absurdity for a thousand preceding pages.

You will easily conceive, that, on the subject of government, Mr. Godwin's doctrines would be entirely of a republican character: they certainly were; so republican, indeed, as to leave no government to exist at all.

It had been observed by Paine, that society arose from the good qualities of mankind; government, from the bad. This idea Mr. Godwin adopts: considers it as not sufficiently developed by Paine, (though reasonable men may here, perhaps, differ from him): and his own development of the idea seems to be, the "establishment of a simple form of society, without government." And this establishment is to be rendered possible, by men becoming sufficiently enlightened to do justice to each other, and to understand their own happiness. The motive on his system seems to be, the pleasures of disinterested affection; a sense of right. And the ordinary charities of life are to merge in the love of the whole.

You will at once see, that upon the admission of notions like these, no existing political institutions could stand for a moment. Such institutions proceed upon the supposition, that every man is to attend to his own interest, and to be kept, by every possible contrivance of government, from interfering with the interests of others; that morals and religion are to persuade and induce him, if possible, not to attempt any injustice to others, but that the point must be secured, and, if necessary, by law and by force; that a man is to be taught the love of his neighbours and the duty of doing good to others, by the precepts and sanctions of virtue and religion; and that he is a good or a bad man, as he does or does not comply with their directions: but that the peace and order of a community cannot be *rested* on principles refined and sublime as these, however real and however indis-

pensable; but that law, coercion, punishment, must be called in to their assistance.

And now, with respect to this and every other part of the system of Mr. Godwin,—assuredly, to those who now reflect on the subjects of government and the constitution of mankind, nothing can seem more astonishing, than that a writer of the powers, which Mr. Godwin evidently possesses, should ever think of employing himself, hour after hour, and producing one metaphysical argument after another, till he had written a long elaborate work, more than a thousand octavo pages, to show the practicability of indefinitely improving the world, by making men totally disinterested and entirely reasonable; to banish all evil and misery from his fellow creatures, by resting every thing on their sense of justice, and their love for each other—on principles of this refined and sublime nature, to be *universally* diffused, acknowledged, and acted upon. Assuredly we should have supposed, that no writer, however visionary, could have proposed to the public, as the conclusions of his understanding, speculations so extravagant as these. Yet such was the fact; and this, though, in morality, the schools of the ancient world had exhausted the science; though the views and reasonings of these schools had been compared, arranged, and adjusted by the moralists and metaphysicians of the modern world; and though, in political science, the writings of Hume and Adam Smith more particularly, among others, had appeared, and had left little behind them, in the main and more important subjects, which required any further explanation to intelligent and reflecting minds. I have already warned you that Mr. Godwin often produces the objections that exist to his theories, plunges them immediately into some metaphysical depth, where they lie in a state of discussion for two or three pages, till they are, as he seems to suppose, totally dissolved or changed; and, in this manner, he goes cheerfully and triumphantly on, till both reader and writer have entirely lost sight of all nature and common sense. But after all his extraordinary powers of this kind have been exhausted; what can possibly be answered to such obvious observations as are quite fatal to his system at every moment of its delivery, and to all his idle visions about property, government, law,

marriage, and other topics of his work:—that reason and disinterestedness are too weak and imperfect to encounter the steadiness of the selfish principle, and the occasional violence of the passions: that no change in these points can be rationally expected in the constitution of our nature: that men must therefore be protected from each other by the institutions of property, criminal justice, and executive power; and the one sex from the other, by the institution of marriage: that human happiness, from the nature of our existence, and the conditions of our being, must necessarily be imperfect, and was never meant by their Author to be otherwise: and that all that can reasonably be attempted, is to enlighten the rich, and make them benevolent; to instruct the poor, and make them frugal and industrious; and to leave every man to better his condition, to exert his talents, and to enjoy the fruits of his labours with as little restraint, as the peace and order of society will possibly admit.

Smith and Hume, I must repeat, were perfectly well known to Mr. Godwin. In the great work of the former, in the Essays of the latter, all the machinery by which the prosperity of the great system of society is produced and maintained, all the principles on which it depends, are fully explained and displayed; that human life cannot be sustained and accommodated without labour; that labour will not be undertaken but for purposes of self-gratification;—that it naturally and beneficially falls into various divisions;—that industry and accumulation act and react upon each other;—that luxury and enjoyment could only be banished by the most unjust and atrocious laws, and that their departure would be marked by the extinction of activity, knowledge, and all the comforts and even all the ordinary virtues of humanity;—that selfishness may produce excess of enjoyment, as may be seen in London and in Paris—that this may be a vice, but that it is the cure of opposite vices, far greater, those of torpor and indolence, and brutality; always the fatal vices and inevitable calamities which are witnessed in the wretched abodes and debased manners of savages and uncultivated man;—that in the mean time the disinterested part of our nature, the principle of benevolence, may come to the assistance of society,

though not be the foundation of it; may modify and humanize the principle of self interest, though not supersede it; may animate us in favour of those, whom nature has made dear to us by unalterable laws, our families, and our friends—this, in the first place, and at every moment; may further animate us, most honourably and justly, in the service of the community and of our country, and occasionally even of the whole world itself; that cases may even be supposed, and even in practice occur, where our benevolent feelings in favour of our family and friends must give way in favour of our country: it is possible, though scarcely possible, that these duties may stand in opposition to each other. Such are the common and obvious principles in politics and morals, on which the welfare and prosperity of the world, and the private and public happiness of mankind had been left always to depend, by all regular writers from the earliest times, prior to Mr. Godwin; and nothing, as I must again repeat, could so strongly mark the disjointed state of Europe, the enthusiasm and the restlessness that had got possession of the minds of men, as that any portion of the people of England should for a moment condescend to cast their eyes on his strange pictures, on the caricatures that were thus exhibited to their admiration, by this revolutionary painter of society and man, by this new and presumptuous propagator of extravagance and folly.

In subsequent publications Mr. Godwin sufficiently acknowledged the value of the "affections and charities of private life," and declared that he had been for more than four years anxious to modify some of the earlier chapters of the work on Political Justice, in conformity to such sentiments; but that he saw no cause to make any change respecting the principle of justice, or any thing else fundamental in the system there delivered. This limited acknowledgment of error was very well, as far as it went; but the truth was, that it was no longer of importance what change he was or was not now disposed to make in his political system; for Mr. Godwin had met with an opponent, by whom this system had been entirely demolished.

This opponent was Mr. Malthus, who in June, 1798, pub-

lished an Essay on the Principle of Population, and applied his theory not only to disperse the dreams of M. de Condorcet in France, but those of Mr. Godwin in England.

A word to explain Mr. Malthus's principle will be sufficient.

Population had always been said to depend on the quantity of food that could be procured: but this was to say nothing; it was only to say that man could not live without eating.

Mr. Malthus said more. He observed that the principle of population had always a tendency to proceed at a greater rate than the produce of the soil in any limited space could possibly follow it; that in new countries, indeed, like North America, where fresh land could be had in any quantity that was required, the sexes might marry early, and population go on all this time at its natural rate of increase; but in every other situation of a community, this rate of increase must at every moment be directly or indirectly, visibly or invisibly, restrained and kept back by some check or other; adding by way of illustration, that the one increase (that of the sexes), would naturally proceed in a geometrical, the other, that of the land, necessarily in a sort of arithmetical ratio. This is the principle; one that is a sort of intuitive truth, the instant it is proposed to the mind. A few sentences taken out of different paragraphs in Mr. Malthus's tenth chapter of his first edition, will show you the reasoning that was addressed by him to Mr. Godwin.

"Let us suppose then," says Mr. Malthus, "all the causes of vice and misery in this island removed; all men are equal; the necessary labours of agriculture are shared amicably among all; the commerce of the sexes is established upon principles of the most perfect freedom; the spirit of benevolence, guided by impartial justice, divides the produce of the soil among all the members of the society according to their wants; with these extraordinary encouragements to population, and every contrary cause, as we have supposed, removed, the numbers would increase faster than in any society that has ever been known. Suppose them only doubled in twenty-five years, a rate of increase which has been known to take place repeatedly in America, it may be doubted whether the whole average produce of the soil could be doubled in the same time. But suppose all the grazing countries ploughed up,

and the food, though almost entirely vegetable, sufficient to support in health, this doubled population. Let us start again, during the next period of doubling, where is now the food to be found? where is now the fresh land to turn up? and what becomes then of the picture, where man lived in plenty, where selfishness did not exist, where the mind was to be delivered from all anxiety about corporeal support, and free to expatiate in the field of thought which was congenial to it?

The hateful passions on the contrary reappear, and the mighty law of self-preservation expels all the softer emotions. After showing in this manner, that the system of Mr. Godwin is at an end, Mr. Malthus then proceeds to show, that under the circumstances supposed, some institution of property would be established, some institution of marriage; inequalities of condition follow, and all the supposed objectionable characteristics of our present condition reappear. In short, that a society, constituted according to the most beautiful form that imagination can conceive, with benevolence for its moving principle, instead of self-love, and with every evil disposition in all its members, corrected by reason, and not force, would, from the regular and inevitable laws of nature, degenerate into a society, constructed upon a plan, not essentially different from that which prevails in every known state at present; a society divided into a class of proprietors, and a class of labourers; and with self-love for the main spring of the great machine, and the usual instincts, feelings, and intuitions, sense of duty, and sense of religion, to maintain and regulate its movements.

Mr. Malthus published his essay in June, 1798, and in the revolutionary state of the world at the time, the importance of the principle, on which he depended, was instantly perceived; and it has formed the groundwork of the reasonings of all intelligent men, on the affairs of mankind, ever since. It is not a principle in itself very agreeable to the mind; and various considerations have been produced by amiable men, under cover of which they might escape from acknowledging it to be true, but with no success; the law of over-production seems to be every where the law, through all parts of creation, by which the permanent existence of every living

thing is secured. Each may thus be made the food of the other, and the quantity of sentient happiness immeasurably increased, beyond what it could be on any other system; and Mr. Malthus finds in this law, as others may find, a philosophic confirmation of the wisdom and the necessity with which the duty of chastity is so strictly, so earnestly, and so repeatedly insisted upon in the pages of the New Testament. In the works of Arthur Young, and more particularly in Mr. Townshend's "Journey through Spain," the principle of Mr. Malthus clearly appears; but neither did these writers so state it, as to show its importance, and excite public attention: nor could public attention have been excited, when society was not as yet disturbed; but it was instantly excited by any profound speculation, like this, when every mind was agitated, appalled, or electrified, by the tremendous event of the Revolution in France; by the unpopularity of old opinions; by the success of new; by a field being thrown open for every dreaming philosopher, or shallow demagogue, to produce his visions of perfectibility, and his ideal republics. Such experiments of daring or mistaken men upon the brute selfishness, the natural ignorance, or the sanguine folly of mankind, are now, it is to be hoped, at an end. The times have been very revolutionary, at least often very perilous and trying, since Mr. Malthus first wrote. In the course of the struggle that existed between the old opinions and the new, the great nations of Europe have been so exhausted, that they remain exhausted still.

Statesmen are obliged to search into the remotest elements of the existence and prosperity of the communities, over which they preside. The book of Mr. Malthus has got possession of the public mind, and it is a most fortunate circumstance for mankind, that this should be the case. The great cause of the improvement of the condition of our fellow creatures may now be conducted, I must again say, it is to be hoped, on rational principles, and with some chance of success; and above all, when the times become more serious, and great alterations are meditated or approaching, the influence of this work may be, it may surely be expected, distinctly felt by those who engage in revolutions; of such men many may be actuated by motives the most selfish, ferocious, and detest-

able, but the majority have been, and will probably always be, persons of warm and sanguine minds, and often of great benevolence.

Books like Mr. Godwin's (and I have therefore called your attention to his work, merely as a specimen of all other revolutionary works and reasonings), have a fatal tendency to animate and exasperate men of sanguine and benevolent minds, with false ideas of the perfectibility of human nature, and erroneous estimates of the evils they see existing; they create in them a hasty, unreasonable impatience and scorn, for the more humble and unassuming principles upon which, those who would meliorate the condition of their fellow creatures, *must* proceed; they prepare the way for the appearance and success of daring and bad men; of revolutionists of the worst description; and while they profess to further the great cause of liberty, and the improvement of mankind, they bring into suspicion and contempt some of the noblest and best virtues of the human character; they make patriotism useless, and benevolence ridiculous.

LECTURE XXXVII.

FALL OF THE GIRONDISTS.

I HAVE detained you some time, for the reasons, I have mentioned, with what was passing in England. You might be referred in like manner to Germany, Switzerland, and Italy; but you must already have some general impression (it can never, as you live not at the time, be more than a faint and inadequate one) of the situation of the world at this particular period; and we must now turn to France. We must turn to the darkest page that is to be found in the records of the human species. What we have to consider, is the history of the reign of Robespierre and the Jacobins. The very sound is a sound of fear to this hour. What must it have been to those who suffered!

Observe what we are supposed already to have seen and known of the Jacobins. With Danton at their head, their first great leader, they have perpetrated the massacres of September. Afterwards you have seen them bring to trial and execute the king. You are next to see them attack and destroy the Girondists, the subject of the present lecture. Of these Girondists, I have already spoken. I have already offered you my opinion on the subject of these very distinguished men; but now that you are to behold them perish, I must request you to consider their nature and character once more. There are perhaps none, that from their merits and their faults, have created greater interest among the friends of freedom.

There are three different points of view, in which they may be placed. You may think, with Mr. Burke, that they were men of furious ambition, unrestrained by principle, desperate, bad men; whom it is not worth the trouble and indeed not possible to distinguish from the Jacobins; as even worse than

the Jacobins, from their superior intelligence. On this supposition, we can have little to say to them. We can read their history and their fall, look upon it as of course, and well deserved, and pass on. Again, we may consider them, as I have done, as not without principle; as faulty in the same way with their predecessors the Constitutionalists, but to a far greater extent, to a very criminal extent, and with still more important consequences. Thirdly and lastly, we may consider them, much as they considered themselves; as men of the highest patriotism and exalted virtue; and as chiefly unfortunate, in having to do with ruffians and men of blood, who, on account of their virtues, hated and resolved to destroy them.

Now, I know not, whether in any way, their example can be made more instructive, than in this last; and I shall therefore proceed to consider them not a little in the light, in which they would themselves have chosen to be viewed. The better to do this, I shall in this lecture quote largely from their writings and speeches. And while so doing, you are for the present to listen and catch the edification, that, as I conceive, may be found by any reflecting mind; the edification, I mean, to be derived from the lesson here held up to men of sanguine temperament, who engage in public concerns, and are not scrupulous about their means. You will see, upon their own showing, how men of this kind become the victims of those, more lawless than themselves, whom they had employed. The lessons of the French Revolution, as I have often mentioned to you, are of different kinds: on the present occasion the lesson is addressed to the popular party.

But I shall first mention to you the books, where our present subject, the fall of the Girondists, may be best found.

The main facts may be described in a very few words; and these facts you can, for the present, keep in mind, until you can consider them more regularly hereafter. You will then, for the present, I say, understand, that the Girondists (to sum up their history in a few words and as they would themselves describe it), though they were heart and part in the insurrection of the 10th of August, shrunk from the massacres of September, and endeavoured to punish the chief contrivers of these horrors; that they therefore became the personal foes

of the Jacobins; that they afterwards endeavoured to save the life of Louis XVI.; that they laboured to restore law and order; that they attempted to protect themselves against the revolutionary tribunals of the Jacobins, by a commission of their own, the Commission of Twelve, as it was called; that they also endeavoured to protect themsemselves and the Convention, by a guard brought up from all the departments; that all these measures made their enemies, Robespierre and the Jacobins, more and more popular in Paris, and enabled these demagogues to engage the mobs, and the military power of the metropolis, in the work of their destruction; that this destruction was soon effected. A plan was formed to seize, and probably massacre them, while sitting in the Convention on the 10th of March. The Girondists had notice of what was intended, and absented themselves. But they were more regularly attacked in the course of the ensuing 1st of May and 2nd of June; taken out of the Convention, proscribed by a decree, and put under an arrest to the number of twenty-two, until they could be conveniently executed; the rest flying into the interior, and in vain endeavouring to raise the departments in their favour.

Such is in a few words the history of the fall of the Girondists. When they had acquired power by the 10th of August, they could not introduce that order and law, which were necessary for the exercise of it; their republic, or their intended new dynasty, was taken from them.

I will now mention the books where you will find the facts properly detailed.

You will naturally turn in the first place to the work of Thiers; but his fourth volume is not written with his usual success: it does not offer the same perspicuous narrative, particularly with respect to the Girondists, that is found in his former volumes: his observations are often important, but I thought the whole somewhat fatiguing to read, and perplexing, as I went along, to comprehend. You must judge for yourselves. I consider it as far too favourable to the Girondists.

There is an account of these transactions, and one less favourable, in the Abbé Montgaillard.

There is a full and very unfavourable account given by the

historians, the Two Friends to Liberty. These writers resolve the whole of these dreadful contentions between the Girondists and Jacobins into a struggle for power.

The Historical Sketches, by Dulaure, is a work that now becomes well worth reading. He was himself proscribed, and numbered at last among the Girondists, was an eye-witness of what passed, and he enters into a detail of the scenes that took place in the Convention.

There is an account by Tonlongeon, which is, as usual, of a calm and neutral nature, after the manner of regular history, and interspersed with sensible remarks.

The shortest, and most able account is by Mignet; but it appears to me, far too favourable to the Girondists. You will of course read his sixth and seventh books. The historian in these books gives the detail; the main facts are in every writer the same; and his summary of the whole is the following: "So fell the party of the Gironde; a party illustrious by its great talents and its daring efforts; a party, which did honour to the infant republic by its horror of blood, its hatred of crime, the disgust it felt at anarchy, its love of order, of justice, and of liberty." A noble panegyric, little deserved, however, by the Girondists, until after the 10th of August, when it was too late, if even then deserved, which it certainly was not to the extent here stated.

The panegyric of the historian will be however abundantly confirmed by the panegyrics, if these be thought sufficient, which the Girondists continually pronounced upon themselves. And after you have well considered the facts of the history, from the opening of the Legislative Assembly to the execution of the king, so as to prevent your being deceived by the eloquent effusions of men who take for granted every thing that is necessary to their own case, and who have the advantage of continually contrasting themselves with their enemies the Jacobins, then the most cruel and unprincipled of mankind; after so preparing yourselves, you may turn, and to minds so prepared, I know nothing more instructive than to turn, to the memoirs and writings that we have received from the Girondists themselves, and again to their speeches in the Convention. We shall thus, as I have proposed to do, see them not a little in the point of view, in which they would

have themselves chosen to be presented; and after having before mentioned the general histories, I shall now proceed to allude to works of this particular nature.

There was an address published by Brissot to his constituents, which is now valuable, as an animated and able description of the Jacobins and Anarchists, that overthrew Brissot and his friend; that is, overthrew the Girondists. It is valuable on this account; and again, on another; for in several places it confirms, undesignedly, the unfavourable opinion, which I think ought to be entertained of the Girondists, such as I have offered to your consideration, in a former lecture. This work was translated by Mr. Burke's son, and a spirited and powerful preface after his manner furnished by Mr. Burke himself, which now appears in his works, and in which he exhibits the crimes of the Girondists, and the culpable conduct of Roland. Both the preface and translation are intended for the English public.

I have already pointed out to your attention the Memoirs of Barbaroux and M^e^. Roland; to the latter I shall again immediately refer. But the most interesting and valuable work, with reference to our present subject, is the Memoirs of Buzot; to these Memoirs is prefixed by Guadet (their editor) a sort of dissertation, "Recherches distingués sur les Girondins," which you must by all means read, for it is the best account of their rise and fall, to which I can refer you. You can then look at the account given by Buzot himself, and afterwards you should by all means turn to the different pieces given in the notes; lastly, as I have mentioned, to the debates of the Convention, the better to appreciate the situation and the talents of these celebrated men. It is chiefly from these Memoirs of Buzot, that Walter Scott has drawn his account of the Girondists in his sixth chapter of the Life of Buonaparte. And I may now mention that this account by Walter Scott, seems to me extremely well done; and will enable you, in a short time, to understand the subject and to benefit by the more regular consideration of it, which I have just recommended.

It is in these works of the Girondists themselves, that such delusions and faults, as should be avoided by men, animated often with the most generous feelings, may be seen in their

most striking point of view. I shall allude to a few passages of this nature. I do not think that I shall thus misuse your time; no object of ambition can be, to me, more attractive, as I must for ever repeat, than to impart, if possible, the slightest hint of instruction to those, who may be destined hereafter to be the patriots of their country, who are, in truth, the noblest of their kind, those who are elevated with a love of freedom, and an interest in the happiness of others.

Observe then, as I continue to read to you, all through the remainder of this lecture, observe the virtuous principles, with which these Girondists suppose themselves animated; observe their disappointments, their lamentations over the faults of the people, their invectives against the crimes of their opponents; and then remember their own prior history; the manner in which they pandered to the furious passions of that people; the faults they themselves committed, the daring and bloody means, the insurrections to which they themselves had recourse, to accomplish their own political ends; to establish what they called liberty.

We will first allude to Mᵉ. Roland. "On a throne to-day, in chains to-morrow." Such is the motto, which she prefixed to her account of her first imprisonment. "On a throne to-day, and in chains to morrow." "Such," she says, "is the fate of virtue in times of revolution. After the first movements of a people wearied out by the abuses to which they have been subjected, the men of wisdom (who have enlightened them on the subject of their rights, who have aided them in the recovery of them), are called into place; there they cannot however long remain; for the men of ambition, ardent to profit by circumstances, soon succeed in their wish, by flattering the people to lead them astray, and indispose them to their true defenders, that they may themselves become persons of power and consideration. And this has been the course of things, more particularly, since the 10th of August."

Such was the observation of Mᵉ. Roland, taught by her own melancholy experience. Let this then be remembered in time by those, who would benefit their country, that though they may be themselves men of virtue, there are those behind them, who are not.

You will read on; and you will, at last, see, that an order

comes from the Revolutionary Committee to arrest her husband. Nothing can be so animated or so striking, as her description of the manner in which she flew to the hall of the Assembly to obtain an hearing,—to obtain justice; the delays, the difficulties she met with; the noise, the confusion, the scene, that she observed, was going on, whenever the door happened to open; at last she got a sight of Vergniaud. "In the present state of the Assembly," he cried, "I cannot flatter you, and there is no hope for you; if admitted to the bar, as a woman, you might experience a little favour, but as to the power of doing good, it is all over with the Convention now." The narrative continues, and continues in the most interesting manner, to paint her efforts in the cause of what yet remained of liberty and right; her sufferings, and her disappointments; the disgraceful, but memorable scenes, by which she was surrounded. She is at last thrown into prison herself; she describes her situation, her prison, her thoughts; she remains in this situation some little time. "At last," she says, "I waited with impatience to hear the heavy bars of the door drawn, that I might ask for the journal. I read it; and I read the decree for arresting the twenty-two deputies (the Girondists);—the paper dropped," she says, "from my hands, and I cried, in an agony of grief, 'My country is lost!' While I continued alone," she says, "or nearly so, proud, yet tranquil, under the yoke of the oppressor, I could still form vows, I could still cherish hopes for the defenders of liberty; but error and crime have *now* the ascendant; the national representation is violated, its unity broken; whatever was in its bosom distinguished for probity, character, and talents, is now proscribed. The commune of Paris lords it over the legislative body; Paris is lost; the flames of civil war are lighted; the enemy will profit by our dissensions; for the north of France, liberty will be no more; and the whole republic will be rent and abandoned to the most frightful disorder. Sublime illusions, generous sacrifices, O hope, happiness, my country, adieu! adieu! In the first expansion of my youthful heart, at twelve years old, I wept that I was not born a Spartan or a Roman. I thought I saw, in the French Revolution, the unhoped-for application of all the principles on which I had

seemed to live. Liberty, I said to myself, has two sources:—good morals, and then we have wise laws;—enlightened minds, and we are then led on to both, to morals and wise laws, by the knowledge of our common rights. My soul (I said) shall be no more desolated by the spectacle of the debasement of humanity. Mankind shall be ameliorated in their condition; and the happiness of all shall be the base and pledge of the happiness of each individual. Brilliant chimeras! seductions that have so charmed me! you are vanished,—vanished all, before the frightful corruptions of an immense city;—but I disdain to live; your loss has made life hateful to me, and I wish but for the last sufferings that await me from these guilty wretches. Why tarry you, ye anarchists and brigands? You proscribe virtue; shed then the blood of those who profess it; shed their blood, and it shall make the earth upon which it falls, ravenous; it shall make it open under your feet."

It will not be possible, I think, for any of you to cast your eyes over the writings of Madame Roland, however slightly, without being sufficiently struck, to induce you to turn and read them throughout. The great moral of the whole is, no doubt, the care and caution with which early reformers should proceed; that real patriotism and prudence are inseparable: but when this moral has been well digested, and made a part of our nature, then the writings of Madame Roland can only benefit and not mislead; can only animate us to those tasks of patriotism, which our calmer meditation has enabled us better to understand.

"Grand swelling sentiments of liberty," says Mr. Burke, in one of his many beautiful paragraphs, "I am sure, I do not despise; they warm the heart, they enlarge and liberalize our minds, they animate our courage in a time of conflict. Old as I am, I read the fine raptures of Lucan and Corneille with pleasure." He had before said, "But what is liberty without wisdom, and without virtue? It is the greatest of all possible evils; for it is folly, vice, and madness, without tuition or restraint."

So thought the statesman and philosopher, while sitting in his closet, in the middle of the year 1790. The Revolution rolls on; and three years afterwards, what are the thoughts

of Madame Roland, waiting in her dungeon for the axe of the executioner? You have heard them already; but hear more.

"A friend to liberty," she says, "on which reflection had taught me to set a just value, I beheld the Revolution with delight, persuaded that it was destined to put an end to the arbitrary power, which I detested, and to the abuses, which I had so often lamented, when reflecting, with pity, on the fate of the lower orders of mankind. I know, that in revolutions, law, as well as justice, is often forgotten; and the proof is, that I am here. I owe my trial to nothing but the prejudices and violent animosities, which arise in times of great agitation against those who have been placed in conspicuous situations, or are known to possess any energy or spirit. It is necessary that I should perish in my turn. But when innocence thus walks to the scaffold, every step is an advance to glory. May I be the last victim sacrificed to the furious spirit of party! I shall quit with joy this unfortunate earth, which swallows up the friends of virtue, and drinks the blood of the just. Truth! friendship! my country! objects that are so sacred, sentiments that are so dear to my heart, receive my last sacrifice. It is to you that I have dedicated my life,—it is from you that I derive pleasure and glory in my death. Just Heaven! enlighten this unfortunate people, for whom I desired liberty. Liberty! it is for the wise people that cherish humanity, practise justice, despise their flatterers, know their true friends, and respect the truth. Till you are a people like this, my fellow citizens, it is in vain you will talk of liberty; you will have only licentiousness, of which you will each fall the victim in your turn; you will ask for bread, and dead bodies will be given you; and you will finish by being slaves." Such were the sentiments of M^e^. Roland. She had furnished herself with poison against the last extremity; but, afterwards, thought it a duty she owed her country and liberty, to die on the scaffold.

The story of the fall of the Girondists, as I have already mentioned, you will easily see in Walter Scott, and best see in the memoirs of Buzot, as published by Guadet, in his preliminary accounts of the party, (Recherches, &c.) But at every turn of the contest between them and the Jaco-

bins, you will find the speeches in the Convention worth your attention.

After looking at the memoirs, which I have recommended, observe the speeches of Vergniaud, Robespierre, and Gaudet. The struggle between the two parties had proceeded so far, that on the evening of the 10th of March, the Girondists, as I have just mentioned, were to have been seized and massacred; they had, however, timely notice, and absented themselves. On the 13th, Vergniaud appeared in his place. But a great leader of the Revolution like this, who had expected that a republic was to follow the bloody measures of the 10th of August, and who afterwards had seen the life of the king sacrificed to the same object, with what feelings of affliction and disappointment must he have found himself obliged to express himself in the following manner!

"Such is the nature," said he, "of the movement that hurries us along, that for some time past it has been no longer possible to speak of respect for the laws, for humanity, for justice, for those rights of man, which it has cost us four years of combats to obtain; no one can speak of these things now, not without preparing for himself the appellation of at least an intriguer, more often of an aristocrat, and a counter-revolutionist: on the contrary, to excite men to murder, or to pillage, is a perfectly sure method of obtaining from those who have got possession of the public opinion, the palm of civism, and the glorious title of patriot: so that the whole people are now sunk and divided into two great classes; one of which, delirious from the excess of excitement to which it has been carried, now labours only, day by day, for its own destruction; while the other, stupified and insensate, drags on a wretched existence, in agonies of terror, agonies which are to know no end.

"The measures of the Convention, which I do not mean to censure," said Vergniaud, "have been indulgent; and we have gone on from crimes to amnesties, and from amnesties to crimes, till a great number of our citizens have, at last, reached the point of confounding the insurrections of sedition with the grand insurrection of liberty; to regard the outrages of brigands as the explosions of minds of energy, and brigandage itself as the measures of public safety. A strange

system indeed, this system of liberty which we have now seen developed! According to this system, we say, 'You are free; but think as we do, upon this or that question of political economy, or we denounce you to the vengeance of the people. You are free; but bow down before the idol which we have set up, or we denounce you to the vengeance of the people. You are free; but associate yourselves to us, and join us in persecuting the men, whose integrity, and whose enlightened minds we fear, or we will designate you by ridiculous denominations, and we will denounce you to the vengeance of the people.' And it is thus, citizens, that it is quite reasonable to apprehend, that the Revolution will like Saturn, devour, successively, all its children, and, at last, engender despotism, with all the calamities by which it is accompanied."

The orator then went on to give very just representations of all that had passed, and was passing, at Paris; but instead of waging war, open war, against the Jacobins, as he ought to have done, by name; he talked only in an idle and vague manner of aristocrats and the enemies of the country. "And you, unfortunate people," he said, in conclusion, "are you still to be the dupe of these hypocrites, who rather wish to obtain your applauses, than to merit them; and to catch your favour by flattering your passions, than by rendering you a single service? Can you never be able to see and acknowledge the courage of the citizen, who, in a free state, however he may refer all her glory to you, yet dares to resist you, when they are misleading you; and can even brave your very rage, the better to ensure your happiness? The royalists have endeavoured to oppress you, under the word "constitution;" the anarchists, to deceive you, by their abuse of the word "sovereignty;" they have gone near to overthrow the republic, by making every section believe, that the sovereignty resides in its bosom: and now we have the counter-revolutionists deceiving you under the names of equality and liberty. The equality they present you, is under the emblem of two tigers that destroy each other: see now an emblem more consoling, that of two brothers, who embrace each other. The equality they would wish you to adopt, is the child of hatred and jealousy, and is ever armed

with poignards; true equality, the child of nature, instead of dividing, unites men by the bonds of a universal fraternity; it is that, which can alone constitute your happiness, and the happiness of the world. Liberty! these are monsters that strangle it; and instead of liberty, offer only to your wild worship, licentiousness; licentiousness, which, like all other false gods, has its druids, who would nourish it with human victims. May these priests of cruelty undergo the fate of their predecessors! may eternal infamy rest upon and seal down the dishonoured stone that is laid upon their ashes! And you, my colleagues, the moment is come, when you must choose between the energy that would save you, and the feebleness which is the destruction of all government whatever; between the laws and anarchy, between the republic and tyranny.

"Citizens, profit by the lessons of experience. We may overthrow empires by our victories; but we can make no revolutions among the people, but by the spectacle of our prosperity. We wish to overthrow thrones; let us prove that we can be happy with our republic. If our principles propagate themselves so slowly among foreign nations, *is* it not because the splendour of those principles is obscured by the sophisms of anarchy, by the movements of disorder, above all, by the dark coverings of mourning and of blood? Suppose you, when the nations first prostrated themselves before the sun, to call him the father of the world; suppose you, that he was wrapped in clouds, the harbingers of tempests and destruction? No, assuredly no; brilliant in his glory, he was advancing through the immensity of space, and diffusing over the universe fertility and light."

It is not agreeable to me thus to produce scattered paragraphs from the speech of a great orator like this, nor thus to present to you, in a mutilated manner, the great truths he was delivering, the striking confessions he was making in the public assembly of his country; but I have no resource: I wave for a moment the texture before your eyes; you may catch the brilliancy of its tints, and must examine it for yourselves hereafter.

As you read the debates, (you will easily run them over, and fix upon the passages that are important,) you will soon

perceive the importance of the vehemence of Danton, and the watchful, unceasing malignity and plausible eloquence of Robespierre. Vergniaud and the Girondists, who saw the bloody demagogue in the one, and the unpitying inquisitor in the other, were compelled to listen to their invectives, their sarcasms, and their public accusations; and, what was still more galling, to perceive their superior influence with the tribunes and mobs of Paris, with those lower orders, whom they had themselves so contributed to raise into political importance, whom they had themselves converted into the means of irritating, degrading, and, at last, dethroning their unhappy sovereign, and of erecting that republic, which they now saw was to be torn from them by these more favoured rulers of the people; rulers whom, as far as they were themselves men of talents, they despised; as far as they were themselves patriots, they dreaded; as far as they were themselves men of virtue, they abhorred. "I ask you all," said Danton, in one of these stormy sittings of the Assembly, turning now to his own party on the left, now to the Girondists on the right, "I call upon you all to say, was it any sentiment of terror, any jealousy of royalty, that made you proscribe the tyrant?—No, no. If then, it was the deep sense of your duties, that made you sentence him to death; if you have thus thought that you were rescuing the people from destruction, and doing that which the nation had a right to expect from its delegates, rally, all you who have pronounced the death of the tyrant, rally all, against those cowards, (pointing to the Girondists,) those cowards there, that would have spared him. Link yourselves, and call the people to unite themselves in arms against their enemies without, but crush those who are enemies within; and confound, by the vigour and inflexible steadiness of your character, all these knaves, these aristocrats, these Modérés; all those who have calumniated you in the departments: keep no more terms with them, I say. You see the necessity of declaring war against all your enemies at once, be they who they may; make a phalanx that shall stand, not to be overcome. It is not you, you who love popular societies and the people, it is not you who wish for a king; it is for you then to drive away the very notion from the minds of those

who have plotted to preserve our ancient tyrant: I march on to the Republic; let us march together; we shall see which attain our point the soonest, we or our detractors."

Shortly after, the Girondists had to hear an address from one of the sections, demanding from the Convention the most sèvere inquiry into the treason of the infamous Dumourier, and then proceeding to the denouncing of the Girondists. "It is not only among his legions," said these addressers, "that the traitor has found accomplices; the people, are they not too well justified in their belief, that these traitors are to be found in the very bosom of your Assembly? The public voice has marked out to you, the Brissots, the Guadets, the Gensonnés (at these words a violent tumult arose; the right side insisted that the petitioners should be chased away from the bar; the inviolability of the right of petitioning, was contended for on the other side; at last the petitioners were allowed to proceed). The public voice," they continued, has marked out to you the Vergniauds, the Guadets, the Gensonnés, the Brissots, the Barbarouxs, the Louvets, the Buzots, &c. &c; why wait you to strike them with a decree of accusation? You outlaw Dumourier, and you leave his accomplices sitting among you, undisturbed—want you proofs against them? Their calumnies against Paris are sufficient. Representatives of the people! patriots of the mountain! it is on you, that your country depends for the care of designating these traitors; it is time to strip them of this liberticide inviolability: rouse from a repose, that is the destruction of liberty; rouse, and deliver over to the tribunals these men, whom the public opinion accuses: declare war against all these Modérés, these Feuillans, these agents of the ci-devant court of the Tuilleries. Appear at the tribune, ye patriots, ye ardent patriots! call down the sword of the law on the heads of these inviolables, and posterity will then bless the times when you existed."

With what sensations, I must again repeat to you, with what indignation must the Girondists have heard the bloody Danton thus flourish over them; with what mortification, and disappointment must they have observed, the shallow versatility, the stupid fury of the people—the people, whom they had bowed down before and worshipped; and whom they

had taught to consider themselves, as the representatives of wisdom, and the only arbiters of right.

A few days more elapsed, and another address from another of the sections, still more violent, appeared, and Pétion, who had led up so many of these addresses, and whose history you remember, Pétion had to observe, "that every one knew very well how petitions of this kind were procured from the sections—petitions which led directly to the pillage and dissolution of the republic; that in these petitions, there was nothing to surprise, but that it was indeed strange to see such excesses sanctioned in the bosom of the Assembly. What!" he continued, "are we to be told, that our majority is a corrupt one, and that the addressers will save the country? And how will they save it? By pillagings and assassinations. Such is the way," he said, "that the people are misled, and urged on, till they commit massacres."

Nothing, indeed, could be more just and reasonable than his speech, nor, unfortunately, more applicable to the most distinguished passages of his own political career. Before this tumultuous sitting of the 10th of April was closed, the Girondists had to hear themselves regularly accused by Robespierre, and to listen to a long deadly oration, where every part of their conduct was perverted with the most malignant ingenuity, and turned to their destruction. "The Girondists," according to Robespierre, "masters of the government, and of all posts and places, the tribunals, the administrative bodies, and the public treasures, had employed all their power to stop the progress of the public mind; to revive royalism, to restore aristocracy, to oppress every patriot of any energy, and to protect those hypocrites, the Modérés. How was it possible," he said, "for the republic to subsist, when all the public force was exhausted in discouraging virtue, and in rewarding incivism and perfidy?"

He denounced in conclusion, the individuals of the Orleans family, "but he could not possibly dare to name such distinguished patriots," he said, "as Messrs. Vergniaud, Guadet, Gensonné, Brissot, and others; he could not even dare to say, that a man who was in every day correspondence with Dumourier was an accomplice of his; for to a certainty that man, at least, was a model of patriotism: it would be a sort of

sacrilege to demand a decree of accusation against M. Gensonné. He was aware how powerless must be any efforts of his to this effect, and he therefore could only refer himself in any thing that respected these illustrious members to the wisdom of the Convention." Robespierre descended from the tribune, in the midst of the applauses of the left side; the right side, as may well be supposed, remained in an attitude of astonishment and indignation. Vergniaud rose to reply: some confusion took place; but on his remonstrating a little, he obtained a hearing. "He could reply," he said, "on the instant, (and if this was an unpremeditated harangue, as it professed to be, and as to a certain extent it must have been) nothing could be more creditable to his great talents, as a debater, and seen even in this point of view, it is extremely deserving of your attention. But all speeches of this kind are interesting on another account: the truth, or what enables you to discern the truth, is very apt to escape from the leaders of parties, on occasions like these; and this you will find to be the case, if you examine the reply now before us. I have already made various representations to you, in former lectures, on the politics and character of the Girondists; they are, I think, confirmed by various passages, in this defence of Vergniaud. "The first accusation," said he, "which is brought against us by Robespierre, is, that we were opposed in the month of July to the abdication of Louis XVI." My answer is, that it was I, who from the tribune was the first to speak of this abdication, in a speech which I made on the 3rd of July; and if, though under the pressure of so weighty an accusation from M. Robespierre, I may be permitted to say any thing favourable of myself, I would add, that possibly the energy of my discourse did not a little contribute to the proper preparation of the revolutionary movements that followed. I thought it my duty to moderate the impetuosity of a movement, which, well directed, might cause the triumph of liberty, but ill organized, like that of the 20th of June, might be the loss of it for ever. In the commission of Twenty-one, of which I was a member, we wished for neither a new king, nor a regent—we wished for a republic; and we therefore agreed upon a suspension, and the convocation of a Convention; and this was the measure, which, after presiding

all the night of the 9th and 10th of August, amidst the sounds of the tocsin, I myself came forward (while Guadet presided) amidst the the roar of cannon, to propose to the Legislative Assembly. I ask you now, citizens, is this to have entered into any composition with the court? is it to *us*, that the court owes any obligation? is it to us, or is it to those, who, by their persecutions of us, avenge the court in so signal a manner, for the evil we have brought upon it?

"Again: another accusation," said Vergniaud, "is, that we have panegyrized La Fayette. And who then has spoken against La Fayette, if not we, who now are accused? It was Guadet and myself, who, spite of the murmurs and hootings of a great part of the Legislative Assembly, attacked him, when, in his letters and at the bar, he affected to act the part of Cæsar. It will not, I suppose, be denied, that I voted for the decree of his accusation. Let M. Robespierre, I pray, display all his talents, and prove that *this* was a panegyric.

"Again: Robespierre accuses us of having calumniated Paris; but it is he only and his friends that have calumniated that celebrated city. It is with horror that I have turned to think on the deplorable scenes that have sullied the Revolution; but I have always maintained, that these were the work, not of the people, but of bad men, who had been collected from all quarters of the republic, to live on pillage and murder; and for the honour of the very people itself, I have demanded, that these wretches should be submitted to the sword of the law. Others, on the contrary, to ensure impunity to these brigands, and to prepare them for fresh scenes of massacre and pillage, have made the apology of their crimes, and have imputed them all to the people. Now, who is the calumniator of the people? He who insists on their innocence of the crimes committed by brigands coming from a distance, or he who obstinately attributes to them the odiousness of these scenes of bloodshed?

"Again: we are accused of being intriguers. And where have we intrigued? In the sections? Have we then been seen there, exciting the passions of the people, by discourses perfectly ferocious, by motions perfectly incendiary; flattering the people, to usurp its favour; precipitating it into an abyss of miseries, and urging it on into excesses destructive of its commerce, its arts, and its industry? No, no; we have been

jealous of no glory of the kind, and we have left it to our adversaries.

"Again: Robespierre at last accuses us of having become Modérés and Feuillans. We, Modérés! I was not so, Robespierre, on the 10th of August, when you had run to hide yourself in your cellar. No, if by Modéré is meant, that I wish to damp the national energy, I am no Modéré. I know that in revolutionary times, to pretend to calm at pleasure the effervescence of the people, would be as foolish, as to command the billows of the sea to be tranquil, when they are scourged into tempests by the fury of the winds: but it is for a legislator to prevent, as much as possible, the calamities of the storm by the counsels of wisdom; and if, under pretext of a revolution, to become a patriot, it is necessary to be declared protector of pillagings and murder, then I am a Modéré. I have also heard much on the subject of insurrection, of raising the people; and I confess, that I have groaned over it. When the statue of liberty is on the throne, insurrection can only be excited by the friends of royalty; by thus crying to the people, that they must rouse to arms; by thus speaking to them, the language not of the laws, but of the passions, arms have been furnished, in truth, to the aristocracy. We hear for ever of terrible measures, and of revolutionary measures: *I* too can be for these terrible measures, but only against the enemies of my country. I would not compromise the safety of good citizens, because bad men have an interest in destroying them. I am for punishments, not proscriptions. It has been attempted to consummate this revolution by terror; I would have consummated it by love. And in short, I have not thought, that like the priests and fierce ministers of the Inquisition, who speak of their god of mercy from the midst of their fires, I have *not* thought that we ought to speak of liberty from the midst of poignards and of hangmen."

The speech of Vergniaud was applauded. The Gironde party were the majority in the Assembly; but the minority was supported by the furious multitude without; and nothing surely can be more fitted, than are these debates, to make men cautious and thoughtful, and render them reformers, rather than revolutionists; nothing more fitted to warn them, how little chance they can have, if they are only men of

reason and of genius, against those who are men of ambition and blood, and who can always speak a language more intelligible and attractive to the people, if it is to the physical strength of the people that unhappily the appeal is made.

As you continue to read the debates, the same lessons of instruction will be offered. You will see Pétion protesting against those who were eternally, he said, exciting the people to insurrection. "And what," he added, "is there now to overturn or to massacre but the National Convention?" declaring that he had lost all patience; that every one knew with what calmness and moderation he had always spoken; that he wished for order and tranquillity in the Assembly, but that he saw the crowd of good citizens blinded, and unable to perceive the abyss into which they were to be precipitated; that he, however, was at ease, and knew that the nation could not be deceived or unable to distinguish between the true and the false friends of liberty. These are memorable words to those, who consider the prior and subsequent history of Pétion.

Afterwards you will see a great speech from Guadet, quite triumphant, like Brissot's address, as between his own party, and the Jacobins and their accusers; but not so satisfactory to those who think that the one only prepared the way for the other, and that they must therefore share their guilt. "Ask," says Guadet, "whose were the measures that overturned the throne on the 10th of August; they were ours: we, who are accused of intriguing with the court, *we* proposed them." And towards the conclusion of his speech, he cries, "Yes, I can well believe it; a chain, as you say, is extended from London to Paris; and it is the chain of corruption: but if an agent of Pitt, or of any other criminal coalition, was labouring in this assembly to accomplish the destruction of the republic, and of liberty, would he not begin with destroying the public morals, that the people might be, in his hands, what they are elsewhere, in the hands of the priests? Would he not endeavour to throw the National Assembly into a state of insignificance and disrespect; to deprive them of all public confidence? Would he not disseminate in the republic, and above all, in the city, where the Convention was sitting, the lure of pillage, and the love of murder? Would he not cause to be heard the voice and the sounds of blood?"

These are striking passages to occur, in the speeches of those who, whether men merely of ambition, as some suppose, or of a pure and enlightened love of liberty, as they themselves declared, were equally guilty of pursuing their ends or their theories by unlawful means; who adopted counsels that could only end in exposing their country to the calamities of a civil war or anarchy; and who, with all their talents and philosophic minds, did not or would not perceive, that if the reins of authority were once thrown to the multitude, they would assuredly be seized upon by mere demagogues, and the first victims be, themselves.

I have already recommended, but I must now, before I conclude, quote a few passages from the Memoirs of Buzot. I consider these Girondists, from their eloquence, their acquirements, their love of a republican form of government, and their daring and lofty minds, as so entirely the precursors and representatives of many of the warmest friends of freedom, that may hereafter arise; and I consider, as I must for ever repeat, the faults and mistakes of all such men, so important; men, who are so fitted to render the noblest services, or to do the greatest injuries to their country, that I cannot but endeavour a little longer to illustrate such observations as I have made, on the character and conduct of these distinguished Revolutionists, by a further reference to their works.

The Memoirs of Buzot, as I must again repeat, edited by Guadet, afford ample materials for judging of the merits and demerits of the Girondists. "Whilst yet young," says M^e^. Roland, speaking of Buzot, "the ripeness of his judgment, and purity of his morals, obtained him the esteem and confidence of his fellow citizens. Both their confidence and esteem he justified by his devotion to truth, and his firmness and perseverance in speaking it. He was a member of the Constituent Assembly, and afterwards of the Convention; where, according to the account of M^e^. Roland, and indeed of history, his virtues served him but as enemies. His Memoirs were drawn up when he was himself proscribed and a fugitive, and about the time that the leaders of his party were perishing on a scaffold at Paris.

"They are no more," he says,—it is thus his first chapter begins,—"they are no more,—talents! patriotism! virtue!—crime has devoured all!" He then proceeds in a warm

strain of eulogium to state their merits and their history. "Strange destiny," he ends, "of these generous men! They were necessarily to perish, either under the despotism of kings and of the aristocracy, or under the poignards of a ferocious people, for whose sake they had braved everything, in the idle hope that the people would have rendered themselves worthy of liberty, by their respect for justice. Why were we to be persecuted?" he continues. "It was because our intentions were pure, and our actions pure: we could only be reproached for having thrown away our time in meditating the works of Rousseau, Montesquieu, and Mably; of having formed false notions of the nature and principles of government, and more especially of republican government; of having convinced ourselves that this was a government only to be established on the eternal basis of justice and virtue; in short, for having imagined that fear, far from being the principle of a republican government, was, on the contrary, a scourge the most destructive of it. It must be admitted, however," he says, "that our enemies better knew the mass of the people that they governed, than we; its character, its particular genius, the degree of intelligence and energy of which it is capable. Never could we have had either the wish or the audacity so to despise the people, as to govern them, under the name of liberty, by means which the very despots of Asia employ to govern their slaves. Our system was only to employ truth, and virtue, and patriotism, in making the French people free and happy. Such were our crimes; and it is impossible to prove against us any other. And yet, we have been proscribed and condemned as counter-revolutionists, royalists, federalists, and traitors: the people have believed every thing which the brigands, who led them on, chose to tell them."

The whole chapter, and all the chapters in these Memoirs of Buzot, are very interesting, and, I conceive, instructive. He goes on to consider the accusations brought against the Girondists. The question, as I have already observed, is clear enough between them and their opponents; but the real question is between them and the king, and between them and the constitutionalists.

But now observe the elevation of mind of this Girondist. "See, then," he says, "to what state are reduced the faithful

representatives of the French people. Accused of having received immense sums from foreign powers, they have not the means to clothe or support themselves; to save themselves from cold or hunger. Their wives, their children, and their parents are in misery. And yet how dear to them an indigence so honourable! What consolations, what charms, does it diffuse over their afflicted existence, covering them with its immortal Egis! what glory does it prepare for these virtuous men! what remorse and shame for that people who have persecuted them! what punishments, what infamy, for their ferocious enemies! Never let us raise a blaspheming tongue against virtue; it is a compensation for every thing that can happen to us; it can make us happy in the midst of misery the most extreme. Celestial emanation from the divinity! I bless thee for all the evils that, for thy sake, I have endured; sustain my courage, and make me consistent ever with myself, and ever faithful to thy laws!"

This must be considered as a very elevated strain of sentiment: it is not religion; but it is a sense of duty, and a tone of feeling, after the manner of the sublime school of the Stoical philosophy among the ancient. It appears very generally to have pervaded these leaders of the Gironde party, and seems naturally to belong to the republican character, when best of its kind: it is the triumph of the mind over the senses; of the past, and of the future, over the present. Condorcet, a distinguished Girondist, while hopeless of life, proscribed, and a fugitive, issues from Paris and the Convention; from the Jacobins, and the perpetrators of the massacres of September; from the bleeding ruins of his party, and the frightful anarchy of his country; and while the sword is suspended over himself, in the total failure of all his political hopes, and before he dispatches himself by poison, actually delivers a work to posterity on the future melioration and happiness of his fellow creatures, and the indefinite perfectibility of the human race! The eloquent Vergniaud, and other leaders of the Gironde party, go calmly to their execution; the wife of Roland predicts that her husband will not survive her; and he is found on the road-side, having fallen on his sword like the patriots of Roman story. Barbaroux destroys himself; as do others. Pétion and Buzot wander away from their pursuers, till they lie down and die.

The sentence is pronounced on the two and twenty deputies together; and Valazé falls down in a swoon. "What then, are you afraid?" said Gensonné, who stood also condemned beside him: *he* was not afraid; for he had, unperceived, thrust a poignard into his own heart. "It is difficult," says the deputy Sulles, writing his last letter to his wife, "it is difficult to serve one's country. Brutus, when he destroyed a tyrant; Cato, when he destroyed himself; each, equally failed of saving Rome from oppression. I have believed that I devoted myself for the people: if my recompense is to be death, I shall still have the consciousness of good intentions; it is pleasing to me, to think that I carry to the tomb my own esteem; and that one day, perhaps, I shall receive the esteem of the public also. But bear up, my love, as I do; hope on! and hope in Him who is the master of all. Mankind have long acknowledged his existence; and I have too much interest in believing that order must somewhere or other exist, *not* to believe in the immortality of my soul. He is great, and just, and good; the God at whose tribunal I am to appear. I bear to Him, a heart, though not exempt from weaknesses, free, at least, from crimes, and pure in its intentions."

The slight notices that I have thus taken of those distinguished men, will induce you, I hope, to turn and consider their characters and their history. What shall we say to them? The crimes of some of them, the faults of many of them, disappear in the midst of the greater crimes and faults of their opponents, and are forgotten while we read of their misfortunes and the calmness with which they met their fate, or the courage with which they defied their oppressors.

It is impossible to save ourselves from an influence of this kind, while we contemplate their high qualities, and read their story. But after this has been felt, and every testimony due to them thus properly discharged, we must not turn away from what is necessary to the purposes of our own instruction, and what is due to the moral purity of our own minds; we must not forget their behaviour to the king, during the earlier sittings of the Legislative Assembly; their hostility to the Constitutionalists, and La Fayette; their resolution at all events to have their experiment of a republic, or of some new

dynasty, which must have ended in a republic, tried; and lastly, their contrivance of the insurrection of the 10th of August; from the first, their referring all political right and wrong, to the mere will of the people. These mistakes, and faults, and crimes must not be forgotten.

I consider the example of these men, in all its bearings, as very edifying, and of the highest importance, to a very interesting, very elevated, but very impracticable and dangerous description of the friends of freedom, if they would but condescend to consider it; edifying and important to them in the way I have endeavoured to explain. But my doctrines are so humble in their nature, and so little captivating in their sound, that I may well fear to fatigue an audience (a youthful audience) by recurring to them too often, and insisting upon them too long. In brief, the faults of the Girondists were not a little the faults of young men, as described by lord Bacon. "Young men," says he, "in the conduct and management of actions, embrace more than they can hold, stir more than they can quiet; fly to the end, without consideration of the means and degrees; pursue some few principles, which they have chanced upon, absurdly; care not to innovate, which draws unknown inconveniencies; use extreme remedies at first, and that which doubleth all errors, will not acknowledge or retract them, like an unready horse, that will neither stop nor turn. Of the old, on the contrary," says Lord Bacon, "they object too much; they consult too long; they adventure too little; they repent too soon; and they seldom drive business home to the full period, but content themselves with a mediocrity of success." In these last words the great philosopher did not, perhaps, mean to compliment the old, but in these few words appears to me, I confess, the sum and substance of all human wisdom in practical politics—"to content ourselves with a mediocrity of success." This does not exclude, but it on the contrary supposes, enterprise and benevolence, active virtue; but it supposes, also, a deep sense of the uncertainty of every thing human, the respect that is due to the opinions and feelings of others, the tremendous nature, if once roused, of the collective passions of mankind.

LECTURE XXXVIII.

REIGN OF TERROR.

THE Girondists are put down. They were the last party that could pretend to any virtuous principle. Guilty, as they had themselves been, of the 10th of August, and the conduct that led to it, still they would have saved the king, and would have punished, if they could, the authors of the massacres of September; and for these last sentiments of humanity and justice, for these last compunctious visitings of nature, and the crime of being in the way of the ambition of their political opponents, they perished.

We are now to see the sway of men, still more violent and bloody; men, whom no crimes could make to hesitate, or turn from their course; of Robespierre, and the Jacobins.

From the first opening of these lectures I have warned you against all counsels of violence and fury; I have wearied you with entreaties ever to remember the wisdom of moderation; to cherish and to reverence that despised and insulted virtue; the safeguard of the state; the correcting guardian of the virtues of mankind; the timely protectress of the human heart against its vices, above all, against those excesses and enormities of guilt, from the very mention of which, in its calm and original state, it would have recoiled with horror. Look now at these scenes of the French Revolution: see, what is the result of this eternal fault to be imputed to all parties in their turn; this neglect of all moderation; this disregard of the means for the sake of the end; this insensibility to the objectionable nature, to the criminality of the expedients, by which an object is to be accomplished; even in policy this total forgetfulness of this practical truth, that no violent measure can ever be adopted by one set of men,

that is not sure to be followed by some antagonist measure, still more violent, of their opponents.

I do not despair of the cause of liberty, or human improvement; it is not necessary, it is not wise to do so: but every thing is devoted to ruin, and there is no hope, if men will listen to no counsellors but their own wild wishes, and their own resentful passions; and pay no attention to those great sentiments of human conduct and those great principles of justice, humanity and right, that are implanted within them by their Creator.

Such are the sentiments with which we should turn to survey this crisis of human affairs, at which we are now arrived; the reign of Robespierre, and the Jacobins.

This reign is best represented in the history of the Two Friends of Liberty. The other historians, to whom you would naturally refer, in one sense of the word desert us, desert the cause of human nature; for they are too much occupied in the miserable office of making out a case for France; of insensibly reconciling us to the atrocities, which they cannot openly vindicate; and they would often lead us, if they could, even to the ridiculous supposition, that these atrocities were owing to the machinations of England. "The intrigues of the stranger—Pitt and his gold;" these are never failing resources, when they want an explanation or an excuse, for what they cannot deny. But let not cruelty and wickedness, and political faults of every kind, be thus suffered to escape your censure and abhorrence. I would save you, if I could, from the plausible representations, from the specious but unsound reasonings, from the natural, from the insensible, the inevitable influence of these French writers; for they are very able writers, and such as are especially fitted to attract your confidence. And if there be one lesson, more than another, resulting from these dreadful scenes, it is, the manner in which ingenious and bad men can gloss over their crimes; the manifesto, that each party, and that any party, can produce in its turn, by taking for granted, whatever is necessary to constitute its justification.

"I hate, when vice can bolt her arguments,
And virtue has no tongue, to check her pride."

And among other afflicting circumstances to which the human race is exposed, it is not the least (it may be indeed to answer some great probationary purpose of our Creator), that there is no cause so bad, in defence of which something plausible may not be urged; and that, during the present state of our existence, we are left to an unremitting exercise of our faculties and virtues, if we are to endeavour, as it is our duty to do, to distinguish the right from the wrong, and escape from the sophistries and pretences, with which bad men and their abettors give a colour to their guilty proceedings.

I speak of the modern French historians. But it is not always thus, that historians are unworthy of their office. Look at Tacitus, and observe how the Romans appear in his indignant pages; and this, whether they are the scourges and oppressors of mankind, or the disgrace. Look at the French historian, De Thou, when he has to speak of the massacres of St. Bartholomew—look at Hume, or Robertson, or any of the great and regular writers on history, whatever be the occasion or the people, they never forget the great interests of mankind; their own first duties as historians; the defence they are always bound to afford to those great obligations of mercy, justice, and humanity, which can alone bind up men together into any state, that can deserve the name of a civilized community.

Remember therefore, before I advert to this Reign of Terror, that I accuse the French historians, such as you will naturally read, of deserting the cause of humanity; and this (as I conceive) for no other or better reason, but the miserable reason of making out a case for their country. And again, that I accuse the actors in the scene, of the most astonishing defiance of all nature and common sense, in representing themselves as the defenders of their country, and as models of every virtue that can be named.

I will read you extracts from the best historians, that you may receive the facts of the case not on any authority of mine, but on their own. And you will observe at the same time their reasonings; not forgetting the protest that I have now made against such reasonings. This protest, however, it may be as well, perhaps (before I begin to allude to the history), shortly to substantiate by such remarks as occur to me.

I must observe then, in the first place, that reasonings of this kind would not have been tolerated, even in France itself, for a long period posterior to the Reign of Terror; and that the ingenuity of modern historians must not be suffered to avail itself of the obscurity in which distant scenes are placed, and of the fugitive nature of the impressions of reasonable men, who lived at the time, thus to defy all the common sense and common feelings that belong to us as rational creatures.

Again. It is very obvious to remark, that the real defence of the Revolution, and of France, was accomplished not by Robespierre, and the Jacobins, but by Dumourier in the autumn of 1792. Both might be in some danger then, from the allied powers, but were never afterwards. The defence of the great kingdom of France always consisted not in the outrages of bloody demagogues, in their insurrections and their massacres, but simply in the acknowledged fact, that the whole nation was and always had been essentially military; and that there was, therefore, no difficulty, whenever it was invaded, in finding a sufficient number of young and able-bodied men to supply the armies, and, while Liberty was on their banners, repel the enemy. What had the cruelties perpetrated at Paris, and in the interior, to do with the enthusiasm and courage of these invincible armies? They seem to have rushed on, to have fought and died, animated by their love of military glory, without paying the slightest attention, or appearing to be even aware of the butcheries, by which their country was defiled. There was an enemy before them, and this was sufficient; they were told, that he came to put down their Revolution; they inquired no further.

Again. When Robespierre and the Jacobins, by the massacres in September, the execution of the king, and the expulsion and overthrow of the Girondists, had raised up enemies to their ferocious despotism, every where in Europe, and even in La Vendée, and in the principal towns and departments of their own country, it might be thought necessary by such men, by Robespierre and the Jacobins, to defend *themselves* by the most merciless cruelties, and it might be their policy to represent their *own* cause, as the cause of freedom and the republic; but it would be an intolerable insult on the reason and good feelings of mankind, to suffer

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such men thus to justify themselves by their own wrong, or to admit that the cause of freedom could have any concern with such monsters as they showed themselves to be.

I will now turn to the historian Toulongeon; the most sedate and regular of all the historians. Observe his facts when he opens this disastrous period of the history of the Revolution. "The Reign of Terror," says he "was begun. France had become the seat of fanaticism, of intrigue, of corruption, moral and political; the leaders of factions were the masters of persons and property: the only consideration, that now remained, was the use that was to be made of the despotic power of anarchy. Vengeance thirsted for blood, avarice for gold, ambition for power, the invader for our provinces; and the invader was the only one disappointed. He was so, because patriotism, and valour, and liberty had soon no asylum, but in the camp. *There*, at least, virtue had a refuge, and had duties, which it could accomplish; the warrior seeing before him the enemy of his country was dispensed from the necessity of casting back his view on the crimes, that were perpetrating behind him, and that degraded, even more than they destroyed. The din of arms could at least save him from hearing the cries of the victims; and the presence of the armies of the invaders alone prevented the reaction of the republican armies on the interior." All this in the historian may be admitted, and is reasonable and just. There was virtue in the soldier of France, but none in the demagogue, none in the legislator; and the cause of the Revolution was by *him* defended, not by *them*.

Observe now the further statements of this historian; and observe the remarks with which he at last concludes; quite inconsistent, quite unnecessary, after the explanation he has just given. I must protest against such remarks, and you will not, I trust, be reconciled to any such system as he describes, by any such excuses as he produces, or can possibly produce. "Success," says he, "which in every government, particularly in every popular government, is the surest guarantee of the approbation of the public, success sanctioned all the acts of the established authority; and the Committee of Public Safety held the helm with a severe but steady hand. What had been before excused by the situation of the Revo-

lution, was now reduced into a complete system, and the revolutionary code appeared; and what in this code was written, said, and published," he observes, "was this:—'Be it known to all Frenchmen that the life, the liberty, and the property of every one of them, is at the arbitrary disposal of ten men, whom the Convention has fixed upon: they will dispose of your persons by the acts of a tribunal, which shall judge, without any regular forms or indictments; pronounce, upon its own view of the case; and neither admit any means of defence or mode of appeal. At the first requisition of delegates from this authority, you shall march to join the armies; you shall deliver up without delay, or remonstrance, whatever they may think proper to take from your moveable property, at whatever price they shall choose to fix, represented to you, by any token that it may be convenient to them to issue. At the presence of these delegates of established authority, all other authorities shall cease; and you shall acknowledge, as law, and you shall immediately execute whatever they may think proper to prescribe. Every infraction of these regulations shall instantly be followed by death.' Such," says he, "was the revolutionary code published and admitted without opposition. And it was not," he adds, "by terror alone, that it was sanctioned; a conviction of the public necessity commanded the acquiescence of those, who could read the code, and their example drew after them the multitude, who always follow of course. And one must not," he continues, "degrade a nation by imputing to it, base motives of servility and fear; it was, on the contrary, an elevated instinct of regard for the public safety. The dictatorship of a few was here consented to, as in Rome the dictatorship of one: France, besieged by Europe, abandoned itself at once to those, who promised to defend and save it from the invader, and who kept their word. This is the true explanation," says he, "of a slavery terrible, yet voluntary, which every one imposed upon the rest, to avoid a forced slavery, still more terrible. The hatchet of the hangsman was preferred to the sabre of the despot; the head was risked to save the hand from fetters: the word 'republic,' had given the impulse; the word 'public safety,' had sustained it. Not only was the exercise of this power endured, but the abuse of

it, and the most arbitrary abuse of it, that a people ever experienced. In this grand confusion of social institutions, every private interest, every passion of individuals played its part; but the wrongs of individuals were set aside, as partial inconveniences in the midst of the general necessity. All restrictive justice was adjourned: as in the general conflagration of a city, whatever can bring assistance is received; and we notice not the malefactor who may glide in, and appear among the rest; and when the fire is extinguished, the remembrance of the danger renders inactive the researches of the public police." So far, Toulongeon.

The facts then of the case, you see, are admitted by the historian, a tyranny unsparing and unexampled. The apology that he has made, may be the best that he could offer, but it is not sufficient, and it is an insult to the people of France, to suppose it sufficient. It was not *their* cause, but the cause of the Jacobins, that for a time was thus defended; nor could any cause be thus in reality defended: such a defence could not but be ere long its destruction.

I will continue to give you some more extracts from this most calm and regular of the French modern historians, Toulongeon, who is too intelligent not to be shocked with the enormities to which he alludes, though he is willing, if possible, to consider the system of terror, as having defended the country. Observe the inconsistency of the next paragraph I shall quote, and then the tenor of those that follow. "The ruling party," he says, "in the Convention, or rather the ruler of that party, which could at that time (after the fall of the Girondists) be called the government, for Robespierre and anarchy had no longer any opposite weight in the scale, being now at ease on the subject of the enemy without, (observe these words, "being now at ease,")—"had no longer any care, but how best to establish and consolidate its power." The system of terror then, you see, was to defend Robespierre, and the anarchists, not the country. "The system," he continues, "was simply that of terror; and never had a policy an effect so prompt, so general, and so sure: one head struck off, and a thousand bent themselves down at the very sight of the hatchet, which was now become the image of the law; the sentiment of fear and respect, which the apparatus of

public justice always imposes, now struck an ice-bolt into every heart, and commanded at once the exertions of every arm. Some, at the first signal, and often without waiting for the signal, flew to the armies on the frontiers, as to an asylum; others, detained near the functionaries of the law, lent their ministry to the perpetration of murders, that were sanctioned by a legal form and appearance; and those, who were marked out for the victims, having no resource, neither in the laws themselves, nor in any public force or authority, resigned themselves without further resistance, and appealed, while expiring, to the justice of heaven and to posterity. Too many monuments," he continues, "of these times of convulsion remain, contemporary and of a public nature; too many archives are the despositaries of these acts of barbarity, and atrocious defiance of justice and oppression carried on systematically and on a principle of vengeance, to make it necessary that history should be condemned to number, in detail, all the juridical crimes of those commissions, that are called revolutionary tribunals. Be it sufficient to transmit to posterity the remembrance of the passive courage of those who fell; surpassing even the indefatigable activity of the judges."

Now observe what an astonishing fact he soon after produces. "At Strasburgh," says the historian, "many executions took place in the city, and the fatal instrument was then moved on to find its prey among the farms and habitations, and rustic shops of the peasantry; it was then that took place that prodigious emigration from the departments of the Rhine, which confounded all conditions in a new sort of equality, that of misfortune, and made to pass over to the stranger, the priest, the artisan, the noble, the farmer, the proprietor, and the day-labourer. The Austrian army, that opened a passage for them, might have supposed, that France was suffering her own defenders to desert her, and dispeopling her territory. Forty thousand individuals passed over into Germany in the course of this emigration." Reflect on this amazing specimen of terror in a community which the historian has now presented to you.

He then proceeds to allude shortly to the enormities committed in different parts of France, and then turns to Paris.

I will continue to quote from him, and I will produce more extracts from his work, and lay them before you, that you may see the case, as it was seen by him, a very regular, calm historian, who lived at the time. You will not then have to listen to any representations of mine, but to the sentiments of a man of proper authority, delivered in a cold and composed manner. And when such a writer makes such statements, as you will see, and which, from the excuses he makes, he evidently would *not* make if he could possibly avoid it, you may easily conceive, what the situation of France must in reality have been; and then judge for yourselves, of the faults of all those, by whom France was placed at length in the midst of miseries so unexampled. "It was from the centre," he then says, "of this circumference, that Paris diffused terror in every direction; even the Convention itself seemed to give an example of sacrifices of this kind. Four of its members, the most renowned for their patriotism, or as patriotism was then called, for their Jacobinism; Bazire, Chabot, Launay D'Angers, and Julien de Tholouse, were executed; and it was thus, that the prediction of the orator was verified 'that the Revolution, like Saturn, would devour its own children.' Already had the multitude become so familiarized with the instrument of death, as to see on these occasions, only a sort of spectacle, and joining raillery to their cruelty, they preceded and followed the unhappy persons, who were carried along to execution, in an immense crowd, though always composed of the same people, pursuing them with their sarcasms, their insults, and their pleasantries. No remembrances of the past, seemed to interest them in the favour of those, whom they had so lately called their friends and defenders: even the very excess of these judicial severities, the very multiplicity of these sentences of death, seemed to indicate their necessity; for there must be, it was said, a conspiracy and conspirators, since the number of those that are accused, and that are punished, is so immense. Foreigners thought the same; it was more easy to suppose political treasons, than such tribunals and judges. Amidst the trials," he says "which every day succeeded each other, at the revolutionary tribunal, and of which the number is too great for the separate notice of history, a few may be men-

tioned of those victims, who had been persons more distinguished. Laverdi, for instance, an ancient minister of the crown, long time retired to his estate, now at the age of seventy, had taken no other part in the Revolution, but that of allowing himself to be made commandant of the national guard of his commune. The absurd and ridiculous accusation brought against him, was that, of having endeavoured to produce a famine by throwing the grain into a pond in his garden. It was in vain that the unfortunate old man represented that the pond was only twenty feet across, and two feet deep, and was by the side of the public road. There had been, you will observe, speculations in corn in the time of Louis XV.; agreements to keep up the price in the year 1729, renewed every twelve years; and as Lavendi was an ancient minister of the crown, this was sufficient. The next day, all the farmers-general, the intendants, the receivers-general of the finances, were ordered under arrest; and an arrest was, at this period, a sentence of which the execution was only suspended.

"Shortly after," (I continue to translate from Toulongeon, that I may not, as I have observed, rest what I say on my own authority) "shortly after appeared at the tribunal, the celebrated Barnave, so distinguished in the earlier period of the Revolution, at the close of the Constituent Assembly. Deceived in his hopes of liberty and of the constitution, he had retired to Grenoble, having no longer any wish but for obscurity; but his asylum was not respected; and dragged before the tribunal, he there again recovered all his wonted eloquence; but it was an eloquence, which could not now defend him from a judgment, which had been pronounced before he had been heard. One of his old friends and the companion of his first revolutionary labours, bore witness against him. After the sentence, Barnave offered him his hand, and asked for his. 'I give it you,' said the iron republican, 'but as Brutus gave it his son.'

"Dupont du Tertre suffered the same day. He had been the guard of the seal during the Constituent Assembly; had revolted from the massacres of September, and had always opposed the Jacobins; a conduct that now could not be forgiven. His judgment was read to him. 'It is the Revo-

lution,' he said, 'that *executes* men, it is posterity that must *judge* them.'

"Kersaint was the next; and a single arrêt ordered all those to the revolutionary tribunal, who had been members of the municipality, when Bailly was mayor; a crowd of citizens, who had believed themselves forgotten, were dragged from their firesides, and shut up, till the hour, at which they were to appear, arrived."

The historian, after thirty pages dedicated to military affairs, thus proceeds. "Never had the National Convention, or rather the republican government, found itself in such a state of security. Germany now, a second time, feared for its frontiers; those of France were safe. Terror within was no longer a necessary means of security (the defence of the country can now, therefore, you will remark, be no longer a plea); and what sufficiently shows," says the historian, "that it was only a *mode* of government, was this, that it now displayed all its fury in a manner the most perfectly calm. The Convention did not condescend even to notice these bloody executions. Too elevated above all such details, the tribune resounded only with poetical reports, that magnified and embellished the accounts of military events, explained and proclaimed revolutionary laws, and denounced conspiracies and plots, leaving it to their inferior agents to discover the traitors.

A few pages more, and Toulongeon proceeds thus. "The thirst for blood was rather increased than lessened by the shedding of it; the ease with which it flowed, appeared to encourage these executions. The cold indifference of the condemned, seeming to be a defiance to the cruelty of the spectators, enraged them more and more: one should have said, that there was a sort of conflict between the spectators and the sufferers; the one on the watch for symptoms of weakness to make an enjoyment of them, the other to make it a point to bear up and deprive them of any pleasure of the kind. The multitude, who are never moved, but by what strikes their senses, seeing none of the external marks of misfortune and suffering, remained themselves without emotion; and perhaps would have been more indignant at the spectacle, which they were made to see, if the countenances

of the victims had not seemed to disdain their sympathy and compassion. The revolutionary tribunal as yet continued to make selections from the prisoners, but very soon the number required was too great to admit of selection; age, sex, condition, nothing was longer an exemption. The hatchet was more rapid than any process of decay to those who were old; youth scarcely ceasing to be infancy, was mowed down before arriving at its maturity. Men of the lowest classes were seized upon, while genius, talents, fame, virtue, whatever had any distinction to boast, only on that account more immediately caught the eye of the destroyer, till not a rank in the whole social order was left unvisited by the system of terror; and the merchant, the artisan, the workman, the day-labourer, all were taken indiscriminately. A common waiter, only sixteen, had not been alert enough, while attending on two of the commissioners, and was denounced by them, brought to trial, and executed three days after. The ex-minister, Le Brun, called abbé, journalist, printer, and minister, was executed, as an *homme d'état*, and an Orleanist; the son of General Custines, not to be saved by the courageous defence made for him by his young bride; General Biron, who had just commanded, with honour to himself, the armies of Italy and La Vendée; the old Marshal Luckner, who had just terminated a long and honourable carcer (he had only asked for his pay, and the answer was, death); Lamourette, the constitutional bishop of Lyons, apparently for having been a peacemaker; Veimerange, an ancient military administrateur, anticipated his condemnation, and threw himself from the top of his house. Ladies whom their age and retirement kept at a distance from the affairs of the world, were yet searched out and condemned, the ladies Lauragnes, Marbeuf, and Biron. The committees of the Convention received an unlimited power to make what arrests they pleased, and the council of the commune waited in a body on the Convention to congratulate them on the vigorous measures which they had decreed. At this period (December, 1793), a sort of stagnation ensued, parties existing no more, individuals being in a state of reserve, and no communication longer taking place with each other among the members of the Convention; each studied only, how he could withdraw himself from all

observation and contrive to be forgotten. St. Just made a report; and full powers were given to the committee of general security (the police committee) to issue arrests. There were already detained in different prisons in the capital nearly six thousand people; and in all the departments of the republic, the prisons were filled in much the same proportion. "Paris had assumed," says Toulongeon, "a mournful aspect: all the common usages of social life were changed; all intercourse between the citizens was become a matter of fear and doubt. As in the time of a pestilence, every one was afraid of being remarked in the street, as having any appearance of being in good circumstances; people dressed themselves like paupers by way of protection, often in vain. Every meeting in private society was interdicted, or rather mutual terror interdicted, and anticipated the measure of the police. No one durst admit into his house friend or relative, unless he was provided with a certificate of civism: the refusal of it was equivalent to an arrest, at least to a detention. Every citizen was obliged to write, at the outside of his door his own name, and the names of all living in the house. The public spectacles were the only places that were always filled; the reason this—anxiety sought here an asylum for a few hours; people withdrew themselves in this manner for a few minutes from the vigilance of tyranny. Retired to his own house, and in the bosom of his family, every man was constantly on the watch for the slightest noise at the door, for it was the sure sign of a domiciliary visit; no other but the police ever coming at night. Whatever the police did, was supported by the legislature; and not a day passed without some law to sanction its violences and usurpations. Were my pen," says Toulongeon, a few pages afterwards, "to enumerate in detail all the scenes of blood that were every day repeated, the reader would cast aside my account in perfect consternation. Suffice it then to mention, that long time after the fall of Robespierre, when it was thought desirable, as a matter of police, on account of the families concerned, to make a regular list of those that had suffered, one was begun in alphabetical order, and pasted on the walls, when the magistrates themselves were so terrified to see the long space that it already occupied (and this increasing every day), that they thought it best to

put an end at once to the mode of advertisement thus adopted, and they ordered their funeral register to be placed in the regular dépôt of the public documents."

I have given you all these extracts from Toulongeon, thinking it fit, as I have already intimated, that in a case like this, you should have real history placed before you, not any general assertion of mine. No more calm or sensible writer can be produced for you; he is an eyewitness; he is no royalist nor party writer; he remains a friend to the Revolution, and to every thing that can contribute to its success, as long as it is possible. He even considers all these horrors, when he opens the subject, as defending the Revolution; no possible objection, therefore, can be made to his relation. Here therefore you have exhibited before you (but it is not yet half described) the scene, such as it took place; and be the conclusions or the explanations what they may, here you have presented to your reflection the long continued system of violence and public murder, which men, your fellow mortals, men with like passions as yourselves, were capable of conceiving and carrying into execution.

Hear, however, one passage more, which I observed written at the close of Toulongeon's fourth volume. "The armies," says he, "received with sufficient indifference the address of the Convention, which announced to them the fall of Robespierre. The soldier, devoted only to war and the republic, concerned himself little with the fate of those, who pretended to govern within, and attached no importance to their quarrels. No change was produced in the sentiments of the armies; and the Committee of Public Safety, which gave them their orders, was renewed without the new system, which changed every thing within, occasioning the slightest commotion without."

Now this is the point I contend for—that the defence of the country depended on the armies; that the nation was a great military nation, the French character essentially military; and that all the system of indiscriminate imprisonments, and wide extended shedding of blood was as unmeaning as it was inhuman; and that though no necessity could justify such proceedings, no necessity existed.

I have already said that I do not wish you to depend on

any representations of mine. It might have been easy to turn the pages I have read into words of my own, and my lecture would have had, at least, an appearance less formal and tedious; but the subject is very important. I am anxious you should know, not what I think and say, but what the best French writers themselves have said and thought; and I have therefore made these large quotations from Toulongeon, who is of all the historians of these times, the most formal and stately, and the least likely to express himself with any warmth of sentiment, much less any extravagances of statement.

I am hastening to the conclusion of my lecture; but in confirmation of what you have already heard from Toulongeon, I will detain you, while I make a few extracts from another historian, a very respectable historian, Desodoards. Desodoards was also an eyewitness of the scene. He says, he was personally acquainted with all the principal men; and when he comes to the period, now before us, he speaks thus: "What then," says he, "was this revolutionary government decreed by the Convention? It seems a contradiction in terms, but I can speak of its effects: every right, civil and political, was thrown into disorder, and even destroyed; the liberty of the press, and all liberty of thought, at an end; the whole people divided into two classes, the privileged and the proscribed; property violated without the slightest ceremony; *lettres de cachet* re-established, and multiplied in the most scandalous manner; the asylum of our dwellings exposed to an inquisition of the most tyrannical nature; the forms of justice stripped of every appearance of humanity and honour; France covered with lock-up houses and prisons; all the excesses of anarchy and despotism struggling with each other in noisy commotion amid a confused multitude of committees of every possible name and nature; terror and consternation in every heart; the scaffold devouring every day a hundred victims, and threatening every day to devour a still greater number; in every house, an universal melancholy and mourning, in every public street and place the silence of the tomb. Such was this incredible system, that annihilated every thing, all persons, all property, every thing. War was waged against nature in her tenderest emotions. Was a tear shed over the

tomb of a father, a wife, a friend, it was, according to these Jacobins, a robbery of the republic. Grief, they held, was not to be confined within domestic limits. Not to rejoice, when the Jacobins rejoiced—not to rejoice, though in the loss of relations one saw torn away all the ties that bound one to existence,—was to conspire against the republic. All the mob of tipstaffs and low officers of justice, some of whom could scarcely read, sported with the lives of men, without the slightest shame or remorse. Often, a person taken up received an act of accusation intended for another; the officer only changed the name on perceiving his error, and sometimes did *not* change it. Mistakes of the most inconceivable nature were made with impunity: the dowager Duchess of Biron was judged upon an act of accusation drawn up against her agent. A young man of only twenty, was taken to execution, for having a son then bearing arms (as it was alleged) against France. Another young man of sixteen, of the name of Mallet, was brought up, but it was a man of the name of Bellay, of the age of forty, that was intended. "What is your age?" said the president, looking at him with some surprise. "Sixteen." "Well, you are quite forty in crime," replied the bloody magistrate; "take him away to the guillotine." From every corner of France victims were brought in carts to the Conciergerie. This prison was filled and emptied, every day, by daily massacres, and by transfers from other prisons. These removals were made when it was dark; in the fear, no doubt, that the sensibility of the spectators might be excited by the deplorable state of the prisoners. Fifty or sixty poor creatures, strait-bound, conducted by men of ferocious aspect, a drawn sabre in one hand, and a lighted torch in the other, passed in this manner through the silence of the night. The passenger, who happened to meet them, had to keep his pity well concealed in the bottom of his heart, if he wished to preserve his own liberty: a sigh that had escaped him, would instantly have united him to the unhappy beings who composed the funeral train before him. The prisons, multiplied in every quarter of Paris, were the abode of every possible species of suffering. The Committee of Public Safety had calculated the quantity of air and light that was necessary for the mere existence of their victims.

The despair that reigned under the vaults of these sepulchres presented itself under forms the most terrific: one finished his unhappy existence by poison; another dispatched himself by a nail, that he buried in his heart: one opened his veins by the first sharp instrument he could get hold of; another dashed his head against the bars of the casements: some lost their reason: those who had sufficient fortitude waited patiently for the executioner, or gave in to the snares, which they knew were laid for them, by the spies that surrounded them. Every house of arrest was required to furnish a certain number of victims. The turnkeys went with these mandates of accusation from chamber to chamber in the dead of the night: the prisoners, starting from their sleep, at the voice of their Cerberuses, supposed their end had arrived; and it was thus, that warrants of death for thirty threw into a state of consternation many hundreds. At first the officers of justice ranged fifteen at a time in their carts, which Barrere called "live coffins;" soon after thirty; and about the time of the fall of Robespierre, preparations had been made for the execution of a hundred and fifty at a time. An aqueduct had been contrived to carry off the blood. It was always about three o' clock in the afternoon that these long processions of victims descended from the tribunals, and marched slowly through lines of spectators, who came to see them pass on, with inconceivable eagerness. Forty-five magistrates of the parliament of Paris, thirty-three of the parliament of Toulouse, moved along to death in as composed a manner as they had been accustomed to do formerly on occasions of public ceremony. They were accused of a conspiracy; their real crime was a protest, idle enough to be sure, made secretly against the innovations that had taken place in France after the destruction by the Constituent Assembly of their ancient courts of magistracy. Forty farmers-general, executed together, showed in their last moments a fortitude not expected from their luxurious habits of life. The Duc du Chatelet, Custines, the father and the son, Brunet, Houchard, Biron, Lamerliere, Luckner, and other warriors, that had been crowned with victory, were conducted to the scaffold, and seemed, as if some torpor had been thrown over them by enchantment; not a word, not a symptom of indignation; they had only to die.

"In these batches, as they were called, were often united people of the most opposite systems and habits: Duport du Tertre and Barnave, Thouret and D' Espremenil, Chapelier and the old Duchess of Grammont, Gobel and Hebert. Sometimes whole generations were destroyed in a day. Malesherbes, at the age of eighty, perished with his sister, his daughter, his son-in-law, his grandson, and his granddaughter; Montmorin with his son; four of the Briennes, with the sister of Louis XVI., accused of having transmitted some jewels to her brothers: she was the only one, that was examined; of this the rest complained. 'It is quite sufficient,' replied Dumas; 'to death!' Forty young women were brought to the guillotine for having danced at a ball given by the king of Prussia at Verdun; twenty-two peasant women, whose husbands had been executed in La Vendée.

"Again: a law had ordered all the nobles to leave Paris in three days on pain of death. A woman, found in disobedience to the decree, was conducted to the Conciergerie; for three days she had taken no food: her reason had become disordered. Born in affluence, she had with difficulty during the last year, by daily labour, found means to keep herself alive: after the law that ordered her to emigrate had passed, having no one she could confide in, death was her only resource—and she came to demand it. The paleness occasioned by her sufferings, prevented not the traces still appearing of elegance and a sense of propriety, and youth, and even beauty; but her affliction had not yet reached its height: she had to learn, that her husband had just been executed; she was called *widow* in her indictment: she was then executed herself.

"Again: a messenger was dispatched by the Convention to stop a particular execution. As the messenger ran up the garden, he heard the guillotine descend: he redoubled his speed; but again, he heard a second: a third victim had now mounted the scaffold, and the messenger was unable to make himself heard: a fourth, in like manner, before he could make himself understood by the executioner. The prisoner was already tied to the fatal plank. 'Pardon, pardon!' cried the multitude. 'Your name?' said the officer, addressing the poor man, as he lay bound before him. It was told him. 'Alas, no, it is not you;' and he was immediately guillotined. The messenger in an agony made for the prison; and he

there found the object of his inquiry: the condemned man was waiting the return of the tumbrel, his hair cut off, his hands tied behind him, his wife and his nine children lamenting his fate and their own: an instant dried their tears. Affecting picture," says the historian, " which I wish I could more often present to my readers, to relieve them from the pain they must suffer, while I have to recall events, which I would willingly efface from the pages of our history."

Such are a few of the paragraphs that I have selected from the historian Desodoards. He is a very regular writer, and as I have mentioned was an eyewitness, and acquainted, as he tells us in his preface, and afterwards in his work, with all the principal men that figured in the Revolution.

I have hitherto said nothing of the military executions, perpetrated at Lyons, Toulon, in La Vendée, and elsewhere, because they were military; and, though unspeakably atrocious, stand not exactly on the same footing. I shall have to allude to them hereafter, but in the mean time I must beg you to observe, that I have only called your attention to the most acknowledged facts, such as happened at Paris, such as neither are, nor can be justified or explained by any insurrection or rebellion, or opposition to the existing government whatever; and that I could not have stated them to you in a more simple, and less impressive manner, than by selecting and translating paragraphs in the way I have done from the pages first of a regular, and composed, and cold historian, like Toulongeon, afterwards from Desodoards. Such facts, however, even thus delivered to you, will speak to your mind, if you come to reflect upon them, things unutterable, and picture to your imagination an abuse of power, and a mass of guilt and horror, totally unparalleled in the annals of the world. It was the proscriptions of Rome, it was the massacre of St. Bartholomew, it was the orgies and abominations of the massacres of September, all mingled and mixed, and lengthened out on one dark and fearful canvass for days, and weeks, and months together; till even the mob of Paris turned away, from the mere weariness of having eternally to look at the same repeated picture.

LECTURE XXXIX.

REIGN OF TERROR.

IN my last lecture I endeavoured to give you some general notion of the system of terror that existed in France under the reign of Robespierre and the Jacobins, and I entered my protest against the species of defence that has been set up for such enormities by two very able historians, Mignet and Thiers, more particularly, and more or less by all the later historians. Not willing to leave you to depend upon any authority of mine, I made extracts from their works to apprize you of the facts, and enable you thus the better to judge of their reasonings. I cannot well go into the detail of these scenes, but I must continue a little longer to dwell on this subject, and in the way I did in the lecture of yesterday.

I have often referred you to the History of this Revolution by the Two Friends of Liberty, and to this history I must again refer you. You will nowhere find the detail of this Reign of Terror better given, and their testimony is quite decisive. These "two friends of liberty," as they style themselves, are authors, that, through the whole of their work, have shown themselves long and warmly attached to the popular cause, and they make the same improper concessions to the Jacobins, that I have noted in all the other writers, and say, that this system of terror defended the country; yet are they at the same time totally overpowered and shocked when they have, in the course of their narrative, to describe these extraordinary atrocities. You will see how they are affected, and justly affected, when you read the opening of the third part of their work.

"What funeral pall," they cry, "is this, that envelops desolated France? What mean those stifled sighs, which victims crowded into dungeons seem to fear should be heard

by the hangsmen that surround them? What then, when the ancient tree of royalty, struck to the very root, strews with its withered branches the sacred soil of the republic, when the liberty of a whole people has been proclaimed in the face of heaven, is this same people, far from lifting itself in majesty above the nations that are enslaved, to bend its dishonoured front beneath the hatchets of executioners? Good heavens! have we then broken our fetters, torn off the mask from fanaticism, and cast away the disgrace and the chains of a long servitude; and have we only conquered to see our laurels darkened in our blood, and to see elevated on the ruins of the throne a maddening faction, that maintains its monstrous power only by murder, proscriptions, and rapine? Yes, yes, it is so; the tocsin of war has sounded, and France is no more; a ferocious monster of hypocrisy has issued from her Areopagus. Yes! it is for him, and for the support of his dictatorial tyranny, that, torn from the bosom of their family, the youth of France shall expire on the frontiers; it is for him that flourishing cities shall fall, reduced to ashes and to dust; it is for him that our rivers shall cast upon the countries of the south the dead bodies by which they are infected. O honour, probity, decency, talents, and patriotism! virtues so cherished and beloved, you are but the titles to proscription under the reign of this cannibal and his followers. Robbery unpunished, plunder decreed, divorce encouraged, irreligion applauded, prostitution salaried, informations, treachery, falsehood rewarded. Let pity shed a tear, and it shall be a passport to the scaffold. Infancy and age, grace and beauty, all, all, are now alike the prey of these famished vultures. A torpor universal paralyzes France; a fear of death shoots cold to every heart; the name of death is inscribed on every door. And is it at this moment, monster of hypocrisy! that thou canst proclaim the worship of a Being above? Yes, barbarian! there is a Being above; and if to this day thou hast doubted it, acknowledge it now, and acknowledge his justice, for it is he who, at the moment thou proclaimest his existence, it is he that sendeth thee to the scaffold—die."

Such is the opening of the third part of the History by the Two Friends. The dreadful detail, which justifies every senti-

ment that is thus delivered in the imagery of a feeling and animated mind, may be found in the third part of the work that follows, and it is to this third part of the work I must refer you: it contains every thing that relates to this tremendous subject, and the view of it that is taken by the historians in the quotation I have made, is the view I have already offered you.

But I stop now for a moment to direct your attention to a particular episode that may be found in this history, and that, I think, illustrates in a very interesting manner the nature of this system of terror. It is a curious narrative given by some friend to these writers, some individual who but too inconsiderately ventured to come to Paris during the Reign of Terror, to recover some money that was due to him. You have here a *more* distinct picture of the state of Paris at the time, from the *minuteness* of the detail, than can elsewhere be obtained. The manner in which this poor man was rejected from the house of his old friend, who durst not receive him; the terror he occasioned by knocking at the door; the night he passed in the streets, as he could not be admitted; the police offices to which he was conducted; the wretches he saw there; the appearance of the streets and houses; the frightful inscriptions of every kind that he observed; the aristocratic mistakes that, coming from the country, he naturally made; the torments of every description that he endured; the delays and vexations about his passport, till he could contrive some mode of escaping out of Paris unobserved; the chances that befriended him; the tumult of joy with which he found himself in the midst of his family once more; all these particulars, and many more that will be met with in this account, give a reader of reflection a more distinct impression of what was then suffered in Paris and in France than volumes of any history can possibly do, and I only regret that the story is too minute, and therefore too long, to be here quoted.

After giving this narrative of their friend, the authors travel on, as you should do, through all the transactions, all the various abuses of power, all the inconceivable excesses of cruelty and iniquity, which they think it their duty to relate; what passed at Lyons, Nantes, and in La Vendée: descrip-

tions are given of the jails, jailers, turnkeys, and other officers of justice; but the historians are at last wearied out. "Let us turn aside," they say, "and draw some little relief and comfort in contemplating some sublime traits of character that were witnessed in the midst of all these horrors. Loiserot and his son were detained in the same prison: the son was summoned to the revolutionary tribunal, and was out of the way at the moment; the father took advantage of the circumstance, presented himself to the turnkey, personated his son, was tried and condemned as such, and executed in his stead. There was another prisoner that sacrificed himself in like manner for his brother. Again: the wife of the commandant of Longuy was in the room, where the tribunal was sitting, when her husband was condemned, 'Vive le roi!' she cried, 'Vive le roi!' The judges, instead of attributing this sally to her despair at hearing her husband doomed to death, instantly adjudged her to lose her head along with him. 'It was all,' she replied, with a triumphant smile, 'it was all I wanted.'

"Isabeau, the ancient registrar of the parliament of Paris, was before the revolutionary tribunal. 'You remember this place,' said the president (it was the place where the parliament had held their sittings). 'Oh, yes!' was the reply, 'I remember it; it was here that, not long ago, virtue was the judge of guilt; and it is here that guilt now puts innocence to death.'

"The Comte d'Estaing, a patriot from the first of the Revolution, and distinguished in the naval annals of France, was asked his name. 'My name,' he said, 'is sufficiently known: when you have taken off my head, carry it to the English; they will recognise it, and pay you well for it.'"

Another historian (Toulongeon) relates, that when the Princess Elizabeth appeared before this tribunal with all that air of gentle dignity which belonged to her, she was assailed by the judges in the harshest manner and in terms the most offensive; the queen was compared to Messalina; infamous orgies were talked of: at last they proceeded to speak of the tyrant, her brother; and then indeed the christian spirit of this angel of piety and meekness gave a hasty spark. "Tyrant!" she said, "had my brother been a tyrant, neither you nor I had filled the places which we now do."

In the annals of the world it is strange to observe how uniformly, when oppression rules the hour, how uniformly the tyrant, be he who he may, on a throne, or the lowest turnkey of a prison, contrives, and seems to study to contrive, how to add insult to injury; how to make cruelty more cruel, and inflict new torments and annoyances on those who must necessarily be already wretched. Instances of this kind, through the whole of this system of terror, as described by these Two Friends of Liberty, through the whole of this French Revolution, as described by all writers, make the heart perfectly droop and sicken. Surely it might be sufficient for men that they are destroying each other; it is sufficient for the animals of the desert; they only devour their victims.

While I am thus alluding to some of those more eminent persons who suffered under the revolutionary violence of this period, I must say a few words on the subject of the queen.

The queen can be little expected to have escaped, amidst such a promiscuous massacre as took place during this Reign of Terror. I cannot enter into her trial. You will see it in the historians; and it is best given by the Two Friends of Liberty.

In the mean time, I know not how to avoid adverting to a particular circumstance that occurred while she stood before her tribunal; it is so descriptive of these dreadful times, and of the people that assisted at these dreadful tribunals; the circumstance you may have heard, but it is not quite accurately represented. An infamous question was asked her, with respect to herself and her own child, the young dauphin; the question was asked her in the midst of a crowd of other questions (for such is the very improper and strange manner of the examination of a prisoner in France), and she had replied to the whole mass, in some general manner. The trial went on, and some time after one of the vile wretches that sat as her juror called back the attention of the president, and desired him to observe to the queen, that she had made no answer to the particular question that had been asked her, and it was not until this moment, and until thus again distinctly questioned, that she deigned to reply. "If I answered not, it was because nature refused to answer to an accusation like this, made to any mother. I appeal to those

mothers that may be here." The suppression of her answer had been, therefore, perfectly sincere; and when it did come, there was in it nothing of ostentation or smartness, nothing but the indignant voice of an insulted woman, addressed to wretches that were unworthy the name of man. A nation must indeed be fallen, when such a scene as this could take place in the high court of their justice; a scene to which I extremely hesitate, though it appears on the face of history, even to allude in the most distant manner, lest I should pollute your minds by the approach of thoughts so foul.

The queen, when conducted to execution, like the lowest of malefactors, on a common tumbrel, and with her hands tied behind her, could little concern herself with the priest (the constitutional priest) that attended her, still less with the crowd by which she was surrounded: the dead paleness of her cheek was occasionally varied by a strong hectic, probably of indignation, that passed across it; but her emotion was visible when she came within sight of the gardens of the Tuilleries, and her countenance changed; changed to behold that ancient palace, so long the abode of all that was once magnificent in France, of a splendour to which she had been so intimately associated, lately the scene of her own anxieties and sufferings, and now the seat of that assembly of men who had brought her king and husband to the scaffold, and were at the instant exercising the same last act of cruelty and vengeance upon herself. It was, however, but a look that she cast, and it was but the thoughts of a moment that occupied her mind; yet how crowded must that moment have been with all the mingled, innumerable, indescribable emotions of the present and the past; disdain and anger, melancholy and regret, astonishment and awe: but she turned hastily away, and hurried to the scaffold, as if recoiling indignantly from this world, and eager to be precipitated into a better.

Of the character of the queen it is not easy to speak; she had the faults of exalted rank, but she had all the merits. It would be unreasonable to have expected from her any interest in the cause of liberty, or any very enlightened view of the relative duties of princes to their subjects. She must have generally counseled the king ill, and once, in the instance of Necker's measure of the 23rd of June, perhaps fatally. The

most disagreeable observation to be made is, that she seems to have been almost hated by a majority of the French people: this, however, might be possible without any correspondent demerit on her part during revolutionary times of a nature so extraordinary. Censure has been busy with her character; and though none but the vulgar consider her as generally licentious, one, and even two names have been mentioned; and an unfavourable impression will descend to posterity, which, whether just or not, cannot now be removed. A suspicion of this kind might easily arise in a court like that of France, and once existing, exists for ever. The very wise, on these occasions, are too wise, they think, to be deceived; and not to suppose unfavourably would be to appear to know nothing of the world. It would be unjust for us, in England at least, to try her by the standard of our own manners, one unknown to her. It is not always easy for spectators to distinguish in a lively, careless woman, between the regard that is consistent with innocence and the attachment that belongs to guilt; more particularly in a queen always eager to burst through the thraldom and even the decorum of her exalted station, and apparently with no pleasure so great as the enjoyment of that social intercourse which is the privilege of happier and humbler life; a queen, in brief, who could not submit to the penalty of a throne, the misery of having no friend. She seems to have been lively and amiable, formed to be the idol of the court of a great monarch, a model of elegance and grace: "never lighted upon this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision." How, indeed, she deported herself at all times, in the gay hours of her prosperity, it may now be impossible to ascertain, and she may not have been, during that treacherous season, always innocent; but when the scene changed, and all was ominous and dark, she was more worthy of herself, and the *misfortunes*, at least, of her husband she shared with truth and loyalty, with magnanimity and firmness, with patience and with hope. On all trying occasions (and they were many) she was the affectionate and faithful wife, with the intrepid heart that became a daughter of Maria Theresa. Whatever may be doubtful, whatever difficult in the estimate of her character, one thing is but too certain, that she was most unfortunate; and when

affliction is in the scale (and such affliction), it is no longer possible to watch the vibrations of the balance.

I have now exhibited to you various particulars, drawn from different historians, all fitted to impress you with some general notion (however imperfect) of what must have been this Reign of Terror. You cannot indeed suppose, that you can ever form an adequate conception of these scenes; but you must gather up the facts and then offer them to your imagination, to be pictured there, as well as you can, in all their appalling consequences.

I shall proceed to offer you other specimens of them; but it is impossible not continually to recur to the thought, how could these things be; how could they be defended by the perpetrators of them; how reconciled to their minds; still more, how could they be for a moment tolerated by historians that come after them?

A word more, on this particular part, before I proceed further to describe this Reign of Terror, that you may the more fully feel its unspeakable guilt and wickedness.

Nothing is so common as for men to justify their crimes by a necessity which they have themselves created. This was shown on a tremendous scale by the Jacobins in France; and it seems a constant occurrence in human nature, from the most elevated usurper of a throne down to the lowest ruffian, who murders those whom he originally intended only to rob. But reasonings of this kind are not to be endured: mark their progress in the case before us. The allied powers invade the country in the summer of 1792, and with some success; Danton, therefore, and the Jacobins immediately rush forward, Danton more particularly, and after a furious speech from this demagogue, they massacre all the unresisting wretched creatures, of every age and sex, that can be found in all the prisons of Paris—and why? that the Revolution, which they have thus made desperate, may be afterwards defended; that the whole population of Paris may be so steeped in guilt that no retreat may be possible; that the cause of the Jacobins and the rest of the inhabitants may be one and the same, and that they may be all intermingled together, and the city set on fire, rather than the allies should prevail, or any submission be made; and this is called defending the country. But again,

in the event the invaders retreat, not indeed on account of these proceedings, but from causes of a very different nature; the Convention meets, and the Jacobins then suppose themselves under the necessity, as all Europe is outraged by the horrid tale of these massacres, to outrage all Europe still further, and to bring to trial and to execute the king. It was in vain represented to them that this was an act totally inhuman, totally unjustifiable; that it would make the cause of the Revolution odious in the sight of all men; that it would cause a civil war in France; that all the powers of civilized Europe would rise up in arms against such lawless and atrocious barbarity. No, no! was the answer of the Jacobins; it is necessary for the Revolution that a republic should be established, for the republic that the king should be put out of the way; it is necessary that the Revolution should roll on, not be impeded in its progress by royalists and traitors of whatever description; that all who resist it, whether at home or abroad, should be exterminated; that there was no other safety for freedom, no other success. "I mourn," said Robespierre, "over the fate of Louis; but it is necessary for the good of the people, and he must die." The act is committed, and what follows? That Europe rises up in arms against them, as was predicted: the prior necessity is made more and more apparent. But further, the Girondists are now totally revolted by one cruelty after another, by the massacre of the king, as well as the massacres of September; and though they meanly (too many of them) vote for the one, they make every effort in their power to bring to justice the perpetrators of the other. But again, No, no, no! said the Jacobins, "these excesses in a good cause are not to be too scrupulously looked into; they were conducive to the public good: it is, in short, necessary to pass them over; it is necessary to keep alive the spirit of the Revolution; none but enemies to it, and traitors to their country, would think of discrediting the Revolution by calling the public attention to them: these are the necessary evils of a revolution; it is in vain to lament them, quite impossible to punish them." Such was the language of the Jacobins, as the necessities, which they themselves created, continually accumulated upon them.

In this, as in every other case, a sort of justification, a

species of reasoning was adopted; and because this reasoning was not satisfactory to the Girondists, daring and lawless as they themselves were, Robespierre and his Jacobins were happy in this opportunity of overpowering their rivals for the public favour, and they turned round upon *them* also, as they had done upon their victims in September, and lately upon their king; "and it was necessary," they cried aloud, "that the *Girondists* should in like manner be sacrificed on the altar of the Revolution; it was necessary that the Girondists too should be considered as royalists and federalists, and, whatever might be their pretences, as traitors to the common cause: *they*, too, were to be massacred in the Convention, if possible; they were at all events to be dragged out of it, and detained in prison till they could be put to death. It was necessary that such moderate men as these, with their silly cries and idle declamations about anarchy and blood, should be themselves publicly punished as traitors, who could only thus mean to betray the cause of the Revolution; that traitors they evidently were, and could not but be esteemed such by all true patriots; that it was necessary that true patriots should alone bear rule; and that it was necessary that not only federalists, like the Girondists, but traitors of every description should perish, for it was necessary to defend the country, and how else could the country be defended?" Such again was the language of Robespierre and the Jacobins.

And what, then, was the result of all these still multiplying necessities, these reasonings of enthusiasm, guilt, and cruelty, but that Robespierre and the Jacobins saw all that had been predicted, and all that they might themselves have foreseen, take place, and found their country in a state of siege, as it was called; an insurrection in the great towns and some of the departments, on account of the fate of the Girondists; a civil war in La Vendée, and all Europe leagued against them, on account of the execution of the king: and they are then to say that the country is to be defended, that a system of terror must be introduced; and because, in point of fact, the revolutionary armies not only beat off their invaders, but rush onward, and terrify and subdue half Europe, they are then again to come forward and present themselves as having

defended their country, as having maintained their Revolution by this system of terror: and philosophic historians are to allow their pretensions, and even men of humanity and sense are to look upon them without detestation, and to talk, like themselves, of the defence of the country.

The truth is, that this Reign of Terror was the expedient made use of by Robespierre and the Jacobins to defend themselves, not their country, to defend themselves against the Royalists in La Vendée, the Girondists and Constitutionalists in the departments and in the great towns, and against the powers of Europe, who thought their rule inconsistent with the maintenance of the established notions of society.

While they were thus defending themselves, and at the head of the government, they drove away the invaders of their country, by means of the heroic armies that thought not of them, and have therefore been sometimes considered by French historians and writers, always the apologists at all hazards of their country, as having defended the cause of the Revolution. But no revolution in defence of freedom could be defended by any system of terror, such as in reality took place; no other consequence could possibly follow but a military government. The enemy might be kept at a distance, or great conquests be made, even while it lasted, and in defiance of it, but no cause of FREEDOM could be thus established or introduced; sooner or later the rule of the army and of some great captain was inevitable, and Robespierre and the Jacobins, though they might defend themselves, far from defending their Revolution and the cause of freedom, rendered its success, either in France or the rest of Europe, from that moment totally impossible.

The world at the time made no mistake on this subject; men saw in these massacres and proscriptions, and in this Reign of Terror, only the struggles of desperate and lawless factions, contending with each other for power. What else could they see in the triumph of Robespierre and the Jacobins over the Girondists, and of Robespierre over Danton? The scene has passed away, and we are too apt to lose the first natural and original impression, which it very properly conveyed; but this must on no account be suffered; it would be

to confound all right and wrong, to be insensible to cruelty and injustice, to lend ourselves to the delusions of writers who are endeavouring to shelter their countrymen from the reproaches of mankind: it is not too much to say, it would be to find patriots in monsters, and defenders of liberty in cut-throats and assassins.

And now I must endeavour to present this Reign of Terror to you under another aspect, one that might not occur to you, one that may not appear very interesting to you, and that renders the subject somewhat dry and repulsive in its details; yet is it well deserving your attention, for you will thus see the extraordinary lengths to which this system of terror was carried, and the manner in which it was made to pervade all human society and all human business and interests in their most retired recesses, and at every moment.

Observe, then; when Robespierre and the Jacobins had not only executed the king, but expelled the Girondists from the Convention, executing some and putting to flight the remainder, the situation to which they had reduced the cause of the Revolution, or rather of their own party, was very deplorable: they had to contend with the Royalists in La Vendée, the fugitive Girondists in the great towns and the departments, and war had been declared against them by almost all Europe; they had, therefore, to produce great armies, to meet their enemies in the field; that is, they had to call out the population and convert them into soldiers, and to supply them with the proper materials for war: this last object, indeed, it was not easy to accomplish. They laboured, however, by every means in their power, to cherish and excite the public enthusiasm in favour of the Revolution, to identify that cause with their own, to avail themselves of the military spirit of the country, and in this manner to provide themselves with the men who were to be made into soldiers.

In the next place, they endeavoured to convert to their purposes the church lands and other property that had been already or could yet be confiscated. In this manner they were to furnish the soldier with his pay, arms, and accoutrements; but here was the difficulty. How was this property, or any property to be found sufficient to furnish pay, arms, and accoutrements? This has been always the difficulty in

revolutions, and recourse has been always had to the same expedient, the issue of paper money: but this paper money, the more it is issued, the more it loses in value; it continually depreciates, every holder loses something by touching it, and the difficulty soon becomes overpowering. The difficulty, you may remember, existed in the American revolution, and it never can be escaped: it is in vain to say, that sufficient food and clothing and arms for the soldier already exist in the community, and the power of producing more and more; that there must be always artisans in sufficient number to work, and materials to work upon. All this is in vain, if the government have no money with which to purchase the products of their labour. If, indeed, the country is positively invaded, every man may start up with what weapon he can find, the government may seize upon whatever is necessary for the public service, and in some irregular and sudden way, taught by the exigence of the moment, the enemy may be repulsed; but an effort of this kind cannot be long continued. Washington and the congress, when they found their paper money so miserably depreciated, attempted to procure what was wanted for the army in *kind*, by contributions from the states in food, clothing, &c. &c.; but the expedient was soon abandoned, as on every account unjust to particular places, and ruinous, and on the whole at length impracticable.

Here, then, was the difficulty of Robespierre and the Jacobins: immense armies were to be sent against their enemies and kept on the frontiers, and where was to be found the money to pay for their equipment? When equipped, indeed, they might be quartered on countries which they had conquered, but in the first place they were to be levied and equipped. Assignats had been already issued by the National Assemblies, and they were now to be multiplied to an indefinite extent; their value was to rest on such public property as could be pledged, and on the success of the Revolution. To tell every man that he was to take the assignat as money, and that he should be put to death if he did not, was an appalling specimen of tyranny and injustice; and an artisan was not likely to make muskets and canons, or a manufacturer uniforms, on terms like these.

But again. The government in France on some account, and

after some manner or other, that is not very intelligible, has always taken upon itself the care of providing the city of Paris with bread: when Bailly was mayor, to furnish the people with a proper supply, was an object of his unceasing anxiety. He mentions in his memoirs how distressed he was once to find that there was only a day's consumption remaining; and whenever bread grew dear, and the people were in a state of suffering, they considered the government as in fault, and the cry of "bread, bread," from the populace, is an incident that is constantly appearing in the history of the troubles and insurrections of the Revolution. Here then was another difficulty: if the assignat was to be the pay offered for flour and grain to the farmer, and for bread to the baker, neither was likely to be well pleased with his recompense, and there was no distress and confusion that might not ensue. The few observations that I have now made, will be sufficient to give you a proper insight into this curious subject for the present. You will best understand it by consulting Thiers, who describes what took place with proper minuteness; and his pages are a good study to a political economist. The English minister, Mr. Pitt, himself a great financier, very much depended upon the difficulties the French government would have to encounter on this subject of assignats. Sir Francis D'Ivernois, a celebrated Genevese writer, continually demonstrated from time to time, that the leaders of the Revolution must come to a point, where they could proceed no further, and they and their cause be buried under their paper (not that the allies, as was supposed, would *therefore* have reached Paris). Robespierre and the Jacobins, however, came to no such point; they but inflicted unexampled misery upon their country, even on the subjects of these assignats; and the nature of this misery, as I have already mentioned, you will best comprehend by considering the pages of Thiers. I will quote a few paragraphs, the better to apprize you of the sort of information you are to expect, and the curious nature of this part of the Reign of Terror. It is quite a study, I must repeat, for a political economist, and all the phenomena are just what he would predict. "The evils, however," says Thiers, towards the close of the third chapter of his fifth volume, "the evils which now afflicted France,

can little be comprehended by confining our attention to the five or six fields of battle which were now dyed with the blood of her sons; the interior also offered a spectacle totally deplorable; grain was scarce and dear, people were fighting at the bakers' doors to get bread, squabbling with the tradesmen to make them take assignats; suffering was at its height: the people inveighed against monopolizers, who kept from them the articles they wanted; against money-jobbers, who depreciated the assignats; and the government, as wretched as the people, had nothing to exist upon but their assignats, which kept continually depreciating, and which they durst not further issue, lest they should still further depreciate: neither government nor people had longer the means to live."

Again. "As the success of the Revolution was doubted, and the validity of the revolutionary titles therefore doubted also, the national property taken from the clergy, and the emigrants, did not sell; the assignats, not being employed in the purchases, did not return to the government to be burnt, and other fresh assignats issued, they remained in the circulation; and they depreciated not only from a distrust of their value, but from their quantity. The precious metals were the only real measure of value. On the 11th of April, 1793, notwithstanding every opposition from the Girondists, who generously resisted so violent a measure, the Convention decreed six years' imprisonment to any one who should pass assignats at a discount; the same punishment to those who should sell their articles at a greater or less price, according to the manner in which they were to be paid, in money or in paper.

"But these expedients prevented not the difference between the two, from being more and more marked; it was three to one in June, and six to one in August, two months after. The tradesmen would not sell their goods, and hoarded them; debtors paid their creditors in a money not worth a sixth of its nominal value; labourers and the working classes received their wages in the same depreciated currency, and could no longer obtain the necessaries of life; the farmers and tradesmen half ruined, were silent and discontented; the labourers inveighed aloud against monopolizers, and insisted that they

should be sent to the guillotine. To fix a maximum then was the next measure; a result inevitable, as each had been that led to it. There was no want of corn, but the farmers would not bring it to market, where all was tumult, nor exchange it for assignats below its value. What little was brought, rapidly disappeared; seized upon by the communes or individuals who wanted to lay in a stock. On the 3rd and 4th of May, the Convention had no resource but to make a decree, that all farmers and corn merchants should make declarations of their stock in hand, thrash out what was in the straw, bring it to the market, and only to market, and sell it at an average price, fixed upon by the commune; no one was allowed to buy more than his month's consumption; those who had sold or bought at a price above the maximum, or had falsified their return, were punished with forfeiture or fines, from three hundred to a thousand francs: domiciliary visits were ordered to ascertain the facts. The commune of Paris came also forward to regulate the distribution of bread: people could not apply to the bakers without tickets; on these was marked the quantity of bread they were to have, measured according to the number of each family: even their *turn* was marked; a cord was fixed to the shop door, and each was to observe his rank: an armed force had often to be brought forward (for the women often cut the cord), to remedy the confusion that ensued.

"Such were the interferences to which the government was condemned (endless to them, and vexatious to those who had to suffer them), from the moment that they found themselves obliged to take every thing under their regulation. Links, however, all of the same chain; inevitable," says Thiers, "as the Revolution itself. Still the price of all articles of the first necessity kept advancing. In February the people rose, and pillaged the grocers' shops, as Marat had advised them to do; in July they rose and pillaged the boats, that brought soap to Paris. The commune issued arrêts of the most severe nature: one I will mention; it came from the mayor Pache in the shape of the following observation: 'The mayor Pache to his fellow citizens. Paris contains seven hundred thousand inhabitants, and its soil produces nothing in the way of food, clothing, or accommodation: these things must be

therefore obtained from without. If, when they are brought, they are pillaged, they will be no longer brought: the seven hundred thousand inhabitants of Paris may then devour each other.' This had its effect, and the people ceased to pillage, confining their rage to denunciations against monopolizers, speculators, money-jobbers," &c. &c.

At last the historian from whom I have been all along quoting, is obliged to proceed thus: "The people," says he, "believed in the roguery of tradesmen and shop-keepers, and in monopolies; and whatever might be the opinion of these legislators, it was impossible to restrain, on any one point, a people that they had been obliged to let loose on every other; and a decree was at last passed, to make the crime of monopoly punishable with death" (conceive what a measure this was—the punishment of death !)

He was defined to be a monopolizer, who withdrew from the circulation any articles of the first necessity; and under this term were included, bread, wine, butcher's meat, wood, butter, leather, and every article of ordinary consumption. Declarations of stock in hand were to be made; they were to be verified by means of domiciliary visits. Every fraud, and any connivance with fraud, was to be punished with death. Commissioners were to adjust the price of the article; if possible, to leave a moderate profit to the trader; at all events, to place it within the purchase of the consumer.

To conclude the subject, I will mention, that you will see, on a little reflection, that the law, which struck at the shop-keeper and trader, and made him sell his article at a particular price, had done nothing, or rather had done the most cruel and useless injustice, unless it could also oblige every one, who had been concerned in the fabrication of the article *from the beginning*, to sell in like manner. Every article, as you know, has to pass through innumerable stages of transport and preparation, before it is finally exposed to the purchase of the consumer; and every one, who touched the article, was to be visited in like manner, as was the last retailer and trader, or the law was vain. Such a system therefore of inquisition, and interference, and cruelty, was to be put in force, as you will acquire some conception of, by reading Thiers, but which it is quite impossible for me to describe to

you, in a lecture like this. "Terror," says he, "was not only to be found in the prisons, in the hall of the revolutionary tribunal, at the Place of the Revolution; it was diffused every where, through the markets and the shops, where the maximum and the monopoly laws were to be put in force. The shops were shut; the people furious, it seems; and the attorney-general Chaumette, in the commune made a speech, which ended in the following manner (conceive the situation of a country, where such a speech from an attorney-general could be possible): 'If articles of subsistence and merchandise are wanting, on whom are the people to fall? On the constituted authorities? No. On the Convention? No; but on those who furnish and deal in the articles. We feel the miseries of the people; for we are ourselves, people. The council here is Sans-culotte; it is the people-legislator. Rousseau was also, people: what says he? "When the people shall have nothing else to eat," he says, "they will eat the rich."

These were the sentiments that, continually occurring in the speeches and decrees and state papers of the violent party in France, and particularly of the Jacobin leaders, had so filled Europe with alarm (more than even the conquest of their armies), that the termination of the rule of such men seemed an event necessary to the preservation of all civilized society. All such society is founded on the rights of property, or on the rights of the few apparently, (though but apparently), while the physical strength is in the people, or in the many; and nothing could therefore seem to level so sure or so deadly a blow at all human happiness, as doctrines like these; doctrines, certain to find abettors, and an audience among those lower orders, of whatever country, who see not how deeply they are interested in the rights of property, and who are never more active, than when they are accomplishing their own destruction. Nothing could be more delightful to the sovereign people, as they had been unfortunately called, than these measures of a maximum, forced prices, forced loans, income taxes, and confiscations; the war of the poor against the rich, of the low against the high. It is the manner in which they would at all times, if they could, legislate themselves, till they found, as they certainly would find, that low

as they were, still, that they could descend lower; miserable as they might think themselves, still that they could be rendered more so.

The detail of what passed in France at this period, you will, to a certain extent, comprehend from the passages I have quoted; you will comprehend more distinctly from reading Thiers, and the Two Friends of Liberty; but you will still have a very slight notion of what was suffered, unless you exercise your powers of philosophic reflection, and even of your imagination, to the utmost. Think of a man, for instance, brought before the revolutionary tribunal, and saying calmly, "Trouble not me, nor yourselves, with all this trial; I am rich, and you want no other witness against me." And it was true, what he said; no other witness was wanted; and he was ordered to the guillotine. Again, think of one of these Jacobin rulers observing, that the real mint, where the public money was coined, was the Place de la Revolution; for it was there, that the people were guillotined, and then, their property confiscated. Of this kind are the incidents, which you will have to read in the histories of this Reign of Terror,—incidents which speak volumes.

Again. Observe, when acts of tyranny and oppression once begin, at what rate they multiply. Observe, that while the guillotine was continually clearing the prisons in batches, according to the horrible phrase of the times, and that while these batches, from thirty, at last were to have been increased to a hundred at once, the numbers in these prisons were, in Paris, on 1st of September, 1793, 597; 1st of October, 2400; 1st of November, 3203; 1st of December, 4130; and in six months after, just before the fall of Robespierre, they were, on 1st of July, 11,400. This is the statement of the historian, an eyewitness, Desodoards. In the mean time all the population had been thrown into different classes, and the more young and vigorous part drawn out, and, with the exception of married persons, compelled to serve. The whole system of war had been altered (you will see all these things described in the histories, particularly in Thiers and Toulongeon); battles were now to be won, armies were now to be levied, not as before; but every man was marked off, some to join the army immediately, some to be ready for the years approach-

ing. Commissioners were to be sent from Paris continually to keep generals, officers, and soldiers properly elevated, to the revolutionary pitch of frenzy, that prevailed in the Jacobin clubs; and armies were to be levied in masses, then thrown in masses upon the enemy, to obliterate the enemy in any particular point, as locusts or ants extinguish a fire raised to stop their course, by the continually renewed and accumulated destruction of crowding inexhaustible myriads.

Certainly political objects may be attained, and objects military, and civil, and moral, and any objects that can be mentioned, if, what by men are considered as impossibilities, are performed, if measures are conceived and carried into execution by the rulers of a people, as if human feelings were nothing, and human society nothing, and human life nothing, and every established hope and fear, and wish and will, that the human heart can know or cherish or respect, be nothing —certainly political points, or any points may for a time be thus carried. But what are we to think of such a state of things? And after all, such a state of things cannot last; men cannot for ever be kept in such a frenzied state of existence, and Robespierre and his Jacobins could only be thus preparing for themselves destruction, and for their country, the military rule of some distinguished general. It is very true, that, before such a system could in any country accomplish its own destruction, all the neighbouring countries might be laid in hideous ruins around it; still such a system could not last, in either the one or the other; but the interval and the crisis was assuredly of a most awful nature, unparalleled in the history of man, not equalled even on the fall of the Roman empire, when the civilized and uncivilized portions of mankind were contending for the possession of Europe.

"Deprived of the old government," says Mr. Burke, writing in the midst of these unhappy times, "deprived in a manner of all government, France, fallen as a monarchy, to common speculators, might have appeared (and Mr. Burke himself was *for a season* one of these common speculators) more likely to be an object of pity or insult, according to the disposition of the circumjacent powers, than to be the scourge and terror of them all; but out of the tomb of the murdered monarchy in France has arisen a vast, tremendous, unformed spectre, in a far more terrific guise than any which ever yet has

overpowered the imagination, and subdued the fortitude of man; going straight forward to its end, unappalled by peril, unchecked by remorse, despising all common maxims, and all common means." Mr. Burke was writing in 1796, when all Europe was struck down with a sense of helplessness and terror at the extent to which the new opinions had been carried, and the success of these great military multitudes of men, by which these new opinions were every where propagated and enforced.

From what I have quoted from the historians, and from Mr. Burke, you will have some general notion, that may serve you for the present, of this system of terror, and of the extent to which the new opinions had been carried. But no atonement can be made to mankind by the Jacobins and more violent leaders of the popular party in France, for the situation to which they at last reduced their country and Europe; every allowance will be made for the excesses of the multitude in the beginning and course of a revolution, but they were themselves mere multitude and mob from the first, and never produced any other than the principles and feelings of the lowest and most uninformed orders of the community; it is impossible to forgive them for having made their Revolution (with the assistance of the faults, I must always be understood to speak, of their opponents) a by-word among the nations, a blight, a shame, and a reproach to the friends of freedom; for they were men of great ability, these Jacobins, it is in vain to deny it, men with tongues to defend, hearts to conceive, and with hands to execute any mischief, no doubt, and therefore, if well directed, any good.

That such a system as this of terror could ever exist, must be accounted for by the consideration of many more principles of a moral and political nature than at the close of my lecture I can even advert to. No doubt the invasion of the allied powers gave a colour to the reasonings of Robespierre and the Jacobins, and enabled them to identify the cause of their particular faction with that of the Revolution, and to set the rest of France and human nature itself at defiance. No doubt the invasion of the allied powers must in every speculation be numbered up as an important element; still it is a very remarkable and appalling fact in the history of mankind, that such a regular system of judicial slaughter should be

conceived at all, still more, that it could be ever executed; and after every allowance has been made for the considerations just mentioned, still that the Reign of Terror should ever exist; that Robespierre and his associates should find a sufficient tameness in the Convention, a sufficient supply of ferocious men to make into an army to attend them through the streets of Paris of six thousand people, a sufficient supply of members of the Convention to carry their decrees in the Assembly, and of lower wretches of every description for all their revolutionary tribunals and committees, for all their jails and houses of arrest, to execute their different offices of spies, informers, and judges, to make their domiciliary visits, and carry into effect their murderous commissions of every kind in Paris, and all through the kingdom; and that they should continue these outrages on the property and lives of the people of France for so many days, weeks, and months together. This, indeed, can only, I think, be accounted for by a further consideration, not only of the invasion of the allied powers, but of the situation to which the minds of the leaders of the revolutionary party, and the people of France themselves, had been at last reduced by the principles and practices of the Revolution; and, for the present, I must end as I began, see here, I must repeat, see here the result of all this violence and fury; see what it is to break down the great landmarks of human duty; see what it is for the leaders of parties to accomplish objects by any means, however unlawful, to accustom the people and themselves to breaches of order and to violations of humanity and justice; to create for themselves, and then submit to, one political necessity after another, till all the common workings of the feelings and the understanding are at an end. What can be the lessons of the whole, if this be not one of them?

Whatever we may think of the principles, of the conduct, of the policy of the allied powers (I am not their defender, nor is the subject at present properly before us), however these points may be hereafter determined, let the crimes of the National Assemblies of the French people and of their popular leaders be acknowledged and reprobated, let the national effects of all these be considered as having so fatally contributed to introduce this system of terror, and let man-

kind take warning. Let these be considered as having at last reduced a great nation to the lamentable condition in which we now see them; submitting, and having made it their political creed and their boast to submit, to the sovereign will of the people, till they are at last obliged, as you see here they are obliged, to suffer the fiercest of their demagogues and the basest of the multitude to bear a sway, totally uncontrolled and uncontrollable; led on from one excess to another, till they are at last to find all Europe leagued against them, and then left without any other resource than to suffer these men of tumult and of blood to beat off the invader in any way that to their ferocious imaginations might seem best; unable themselves to know what to think, or what to do; assenting to one point, indeed, that the enemy was not to give law to their country. But having acquiesced and submitted to the obligation of this one eternal maxim of national honour, to find themselves placed by it in a situation the most calamitous that human beings ever yet experienced, by perceiving themselves surrendered to the disposal of rulers without pity and without remorse, acting without discrimination, without even any sense or meaning in their imprisonments and executions, with a sort of insanity of cruelty, as if they had no wish but for the execration of their fellow creatures, no ambition but to procure for themselves assassination, no object but to render their Revolution a horror to mankind; worst of all, to hear these monsters of barbarity running changes on virtue, humanity, and justice; anathematizing others as the tyrants, oppressors, and murderers of mankind, and proposing themselves as the defenders of liberty, and as the patriots and benefactors of France. Certainly no situation in which a civilized community was ever placed can be compared to this, and I cannot but consider the people of France as paralyzed and borne down, as rendered insensate, motionless, and dead by the long protracted succession of outrages and tumults, and above all, by long familiarity with violations, in themselves and their leaders, of principle and duty.

I must therefore conclude my lecture with repeating the lesson I have already insisted upon, repeating it, in a few simple words, Let men take warning; let them here see what human nature may become.

LECTURE XL.

REIGN OF TERROR.

I HAVE endeavoured in the two last lectures to give you some general notice of what was passing in Paris and in the rest of France during the Reign of Terror. You cannot be too well acquainted with it.

I shall therefore attempt, in the lecture of to-day, to offer you a new source of information. I shall refer you to the pages of the Moniteur, the great national gazette of France at the time. I will, in the first place, however, say a few words in the way of preface.

Such scenes as I have already alluded to could not but produce a strong impression on the minds of all the thinking men of Europe.

In the parliamentary debates of your own country you will find a very able and elaborate description of the system of the Jacobins in a speech made by the present Marquis Wellesley, then Lord Mornington, in his place in the House of Commons; it is highly worth your reading. Strong facts are alluded to; and in like manner, all through the later works of Mr. Burke, the system of the Jacobins is always depicted in the most vivid colours by this great writer; and both in these later works, and in this speech of Lord Mornington, and again in the speeches of Mr. Pitt, and in various pamphlets of the day, nothing can be so repulsive as the representations that are given; so that I have sometimes been inclined to suspect that the picture had been overcharged; but I have turned over the pages of the Moniteurs, and often been almost surprised to find the dreadful facts and scenes, to which our orators and writers referred, appearing regularly inserted, without the slightest remark or comment, in these official gazettes, for such at the time they were. The result

of the whole of the impression that I have received induces me to recommend you to do the same.

I know not that the labour is very great of consulting the columns of this daily newspaper through the years 1793 and 1794; when you are acquainted with the history, your eye will easily fasten on those parts of these journals that more especially deserve your attention. The military reports, of which they chiefly consist (after reading a few, to see their vaunting, revolutionary style and manner), you may pass over, and you may easily select from the rest such reports and speeches, addressed to the Convention on other subjects, as will repay your labour. As usual, they strike you more when seen in their proper place; and that such facts and such scenes and such reasonings as appear should be found in the common daily paper, in the dull, grave, official gazette of the country, conveys an impression that cannot be described of the extraordinary state of society at this period in Paris and in France, of the unexampled situation (it must be confessed) of Europe, when such a people, as we see here depicted, were overrunning it with their armies; of the most unexpected and appalling issue at which the progress of the new opinions had, from one circumstance and another, at last arrived.

To impart to you, as well as I can, something of the impression which I have myself received, I will now mention to you what are the general articles of information, and some of the particulars, which I observed, as I turned over the columns of those Moniteurs that were published during the year 1793, and to the fall of Robespierre in the middle of 1794.

My lecture will thus be rendered a lecture of detail, and all detail is an exercise of patience; but it is on occasions like these that men of philosophic minds have such an advantage over others; no detail is fatiguing to them, if it furnish them with any facts; it is here that lies, as they well know, the great province of instruction. Facts are the great object of their inquiry, and if they can be put into possession of these facts, they ask no more. They say with Archimedes of old, δος μοι στω, give me a foundation on which to rest my reasonings, and leave me to build the proper theory and draw the proper

conclusions. Look, for instance, at the History of Hume; enjoy, if you please, the beautiful narrative and the striking remarks with which it is accompanied, but turn by all means to each appendix, and see the manner in which facts of every kind, often to appearance quite insignificant, are gathered up by this meditating, sagacious observer, and converted to some of the most useful purposes of history. You must try to do the same to-day yourselves. I will read you extracts from the daily journals of France, these are to be your facts; and as I read, you are to consider the conclusions that can be drawn from them. At every moment, while I am reading to you, you are to ask yourselves, if such could be the paragraphs found in a common newspaper, or rather the government newspaper, what must have been the situation of France, and of Europe itself, which is always so connected with France? —Certainly a situation most unparalleled.

After these prefatory remarks, I will proceed to give you some general account of what I observed while turning over the leaves of the Moniteur.

In the first place, I perceived extracts given from our own debates in both houses of parliament, abridged, but affording the French nation a general notion of the nature of the speeches and views of the leading members. Lord Stanhope seems to have been their favourite; Pitt only another name for the principle of evil. The comments on the English nation and its different statesmen are sometimes curious.

Again: in the Moniteurs you will also find, very often, the proceedings of the Jacobin club; always more furious, generally more important, than those of the Convention itself. It is in these sittings, that may best be seen the real nature of the Jacobin party. You have the speeches and views of the members, sometimes singularly atrocious, sometimes singularly absurd, not unfrequently, both; the same may be said of many of the addresses that continually came from different sections and municipalities of Paris, from different societies and departments in the kingdom; all highly characteristic of this extraordinary period.

The general fury and political fanaticism, the extravagances to which the new opinions were at last carried, are here seen: and here is also shown, what we are to expect, when all the

common notions of mankind are broken up, and when every man can find an audience for every opinion or doctrine or project, that may have occurred to his own particular mind or fancy. This is now, as these dreadful men were not permitted by the Almighty ultimately to overturn the world (though for a time they shook it to its centre), this is now, the great edification of the scene.

You see too announced in the Moniteurs, many of the books that were published at the time, the spectacles that were exhibited, all characteristic of the period, and numerous notices of the politics of other countries. Accounts too are given of the trials of public offenders, of suspected or unsuccessful generals, Custine for instance, of the queen, the Girondists. The whole is always a picture of the exoteric history of the Revolution; the interior springs and movements of the machine are not visible. This may in general be said of the Moniteurs all through the Revolution. But during this particular period of the reign of the Jacobins, even in the face of this exterior history, traits are visible of the most extraordinary nature, and such as are now perhaps fitted to furnish you with the most durable and accurate impression of the whole, provided you make what you observe, as I have already intimated to you, the subject of your reflections, and continually ask yourselves if such was the grave, cold, dull, formal official gazette of the period, what must all the time have been the real scene?

And now to give a few instances and illustrate a little what I am saying. During the earlier part of the year 1793, the pages of the Moniteur are occupied with the trial of the king, the concerns of the Girondists, and the war with England. In the mean time you may observe a curious article under the title of "Etat civil." This article may be often seen in the Moniteurs, and it is a sort of official account of the divorces, marriages, births, and deaths, that took place in the city of Paris. In the Moniteur of the 3rd of April, 1793, for instance, you will find the divorces and marriages of the preceding months summed up: divorces, 562; marriages, 1875. Conceive what must be the state of society, when the divorces were to the marriages, in about the proportion of three to ten. And in this sort of manner they proceeded; not the slightest

comment made on these divorces and marriages, any more than on the births and deaths; all appearing to be equally thought matters of course. In page 278 of the Moniteur for Frimaire, 1794, they are summed up for the month of November, 1793:—divorces, 136; marriages 832; for the month of Pluviose, divorces, 178; marriages, 810; making a proportion of three hundred and fourteen, to one thousand six hundred and forty-two, or about one to five and a fifth nearly; which, though better than before, gives still a most melancholy picture of the consequences of turning marriage into a contract merely civil, to be dissolved at the pleasure of the parties.

But the articles connected with the insurrection and subjugation of Lyons, as the year rolls on, arrest our attention, and as they are specimens of the Reign of Terror, of the nature of the Jacobins, and of their mode of defending the Revolution, or rather of defending their own party, and of contending with all those enemies, which their violence had raised up against them, I will give you a few extracts from the speeches and reports of the principal actors in the scene. But in the first place, as a sort of ludicrous preparation for what you will have to read in the regular histories of the cruelties exercised at Lyons and La Vendée, and in Paris itself, Bourdeaux, and other places, you will observe a curious article in one of the Moniteurs in November, 1793. You will see a regular deputation come from one of the sections of Paris, and the orator gravely proposes to familiarize the people with *virtue*; that therefore, in Paris, the Hotel de Dieu shall be called "Temple of Republican Humanity," the adjacent streets, "Generosity Street," "Sensibility Street," &c. &c.; the next order of streets "Temperance Street," "Sobriety Street," &c. &c. "And thus," says the orator, "thus will the people have every moment the name of some virtue or other in their mouths, and they will soon have morality in their hearts."

Again: before I proceed, I must beg you always to observe that, in every instance of extract or reference to passages in these Moniteurs, I find myself obliged, from want of time, so to abridge and mutilate them, that I do no proper justice to what I conceive is sometimes the atrociousness, sometimes the absurdity, of the original article. I am so limited in this

particular point of time, that this cannot be avoided; and you must rather consider me as giving hints to your imagination and curiosity, than fully exhibiting to you such materials as the case really contains for your judgment. In the nauseous instance just alluded to, and but alluded to, the Sensibility Street, Generosity Street, &c. the National Assembly did not laugh at the orator of this sentimental section, or drive him from their bar, as occupying their time so idly, but they applauded him, ordered his discourse to be printed, sent to the Committee for Public Instruction, &c. &c. This, as I have mentioned, was in November, 1793, on the 15th Brumaire; and if you look at the histories, you will see that the national humanity, generosity, sensibility, &c. &c. had been, a few days before, exhibited in the public *execution* of Brissot, Vergniaud, and nineteen others of the Girondists. In like manner, the morality of the people of Paris, a subject so interesting to the orator and his amiable section, had been just witnessed in the ratio of the divorces and marriages of the month, one hundred and thirty-six to eight hundred and thirty-two, or about one to six.

But now to proceed to the subject of Lyons. From that devoted city, on the 9th of the following month, the revolutionary tribunal established there sent word to the Convention, "that the sword of the law was falling on the heads of the conspirators at the rate of thirty at a time; that they had already dispatched two hundred; that they were occupied in the most unceasing manner in the discharge of their functions; that these traitors cried out, that they died for Louis XVII., but that the people overpowered them with the virtuous cries of 'Vive la république!' and 'Perish all kings, and the traitors that resemble them!' and that kings would soon have no friends but at the gallows."

In five days after, the same president of the same tribunal writes to the same Convention, "I send you a second list; the total sum now amounts to three hundred. A more grand act of justice is preparing: four or five hundred, with which the prisons are filled, are, one of these days, to expiate their crimes; the stroke of powder shall purge them from the earth by one single discharge. May this fête impress for ever a terror on the minds of wicked men, and give confidence to

the hearts of republicans! Yes, I say this fête; fête is the proper word: when crime descends to the tomb, it is humanity that breathes anew, and it is the fête of virtue."

Soon after, (the terrible Collot d'Herbois is one of those who writes from Lyons:) "Nature," says he, "resumes her rights, humanity seems to us avenged, our country consoled, and the Republic preserved, while seated on its true foundations, the ashes of these cowardly assassins. Ah, if a sensibility, ill conceived and unnatural, did not draw aside the public reason, did not betray the general sense of right, did not sometimes paralyze the nervous arms that are to launch the popular thunder; if justice, that should be unvariable, was not retarded in its terrible course by exceptions, which, though made to save a few tears from individuals, cause, in fact, rivers of blood to flow; if a holy and courageous proscription was but pronounced against all oppressors, with the same energy, through the whole extent of the Republic, then indeed would Toulon be to-morrow evacuated, and our infamous enemies, in their despair, would turn against themselves, their prisons, and their poignards, and destroy themselves by their own hands. Terror, salutary terror, is truly here the order of the day," &c. &c.

Soon after an orator in the Assembly, Milhaud, observes, "Whoever is not for the people is against them, and merits death. It was Marat, the friend of the people, who said that for the firm establishment of the public liberty the fall of two hundred thousand heads was necessary; two hundred thousand freemen have already perished: and who is there among us that, to avert evils like these, if he had but within the reach of the sword of liberty all the conspirators, all the traitors, all the agents of despotic courts, all the fanatical monsters of La Vendée, would not exterminate them all; and if Marat had saved but one friend to liberty at the cost of all the blood of tyrants and their satellites, would not this generous Jacobin have deserved well of humanity?"

These are sentiments expressed, you will remember, in the great assembly of the nation at this particular period, in December, 1793.

In the sittings of the Jacobins, about the same time, "A drop of blood," said Collot d'Herbois, giving an account of

his proceedings at Lyons, "a drop of blood from the veins of a *patriot* falls upon my heart; but I have no pity for conspirators. We destroyed with cannon two hundred at a time; and this is made a crime in us. Do they not know that it is rather a mark of sensibility? When the guillotine descends on twenty traitors, he who is last executed dies twenty times; but these two hundred perished at once. The thunderbolt of the people strikes like that of the heavens, and leaves behind it but annihilation and ashes. They talk of sensibility, and we too have sensibility; the Jacobins have all the virtues, they are compassionate, humane, and generous; but all these sentiments they reserve for patriots, who are their brothers, which aristocrats will never be."

Fouché, addressing himself to this same amiable Collot d'Herbois, when returned to Paris, soon after writes from Lyons in the following manner: "And we also, my friend, *we* have contributed to the taking of Toulon, in spreading terror among the wretches that entered there, in presenting to them thousands of the dead bodies of their accomplices." Again: "The war is at an end, if we know how to turn to proper advantage this memorable victory. Let us be terrible, lest we should be feeble or cruel; let us annihilate, in our anger, and at a blow, all these rebels, these conspirators, these traitors, to save ourselves the misery and long affliction of punishing them like kings. Let us exercise justice after the example of nature, our vengeance after the manner of the people; let us strike as does the thunderbolt, and let the very ashes of our enemies disappear from the soil of liberty. From every part let the perfidious and ferocious English be assailed, &c. &c. Adieu, my friend! the tears of joy roll down from my eyes, they inundate my soul. P. S. We have but one mode of celebrating our victory; we send this evening two hundred and thirteen rebels to be destroyed by the fire of powder."

It is not with unmingled emotions that one can peruse the speeches and addresses and decrees of these ferocious men; sometimes a feeling of ridicule, something like amusement, passes across our minds, in defiance of every fitter sentiment of sympathy with the situation of France and of Europe. It is, as Burke said of some of the prior scenes of the Revolution, it is alternate scorn and horror, it is alternate laughter and tears.

For instance: in the Moniteur of the 2nd of January, 1794, is an address adopted by the Jacobins on the subject of saltpetre; a very reasonable subject of concern in the commercial state of France at the time, and to be provided for, one might have thought, in a business-like manner. But no, "To arms! to arms!" says the address, "liberty is in danger; the enemy without, rebels within. To arms! to arms, citizens! Iron we have enough; we must have fire: nature has condensed it in saltpetre; it is the soul of muskets and of cannons, &c. &c. Nature, whose empire you are reestablishing, offers you all the fire which she keeps in her beneficent bosom to found and maintain your liberties: assist her throes, animate these machines, electrize the very powder, exterminate the destroyers of humanity. Citizens! in the name of the human race, now in revolution, the happiness of which is deposited in saltpetre; we conjure you to show your patriotism in collecting, to the very last atom, of this precious material; not a cellar shall soon escape from research, &c. &c. Citizens! our tyrants say, 'The war shall only cease with the last guinea.' The Republicans answer, 'Only with the last drop of our blood;' and do you each of you add, 'The safety of the human race lies, perhaps, in the last pound of saltpetre; and here I offer it to Liberty,' &c. &c. To arms! to arms, citizens! but first and foremost, to saltpetre, to powder!"

This éloge on saltpetre, this cellar-stirring appeal, seems not to have been in vain. Soon after comes a deputation from one of the sections, brandishing all the instruments necessary to make saltpetre; and, for the first time in their lives, the poor Muses are pressed into the service, are to be revolutionized also, and a hymn is regularly sung to the honour of the aforesaid saltpetre. In the present year of 1829, Parnassus being, like the rest of the world, returned to its ordinary avocations (it was once, however, somewhat disturbed by the Revolution, even in England), I cannot get this saltpetre-hymn translated into English verse, but a line or two extracted from it, and turned into unworthy prose, will convey to you the import of the strain: "Tremble, tyrants! see here the thunder that shall reduce your palaces to dust ..... And thou, thou that the rage of these sovereigns never tore from the earth before, but for the ruin

of mankind, thou, precious saltpetre, appear thou now for a better office! Liberty calls thee," &c. &c. One of the citizens, the gunpowder Percy of the section, then appeared at the bar, and assured the Convention that their decree on the subject of saltpetre is the natural expression of reason; that the land of liberty has become its own proper defence, and that fifteen quintals have been prepared. "Generous defenders," said the orator, addressing himself to the grim Molochs of the assembly, "generous defenders of our liberty! remain upon that sacred mountain! here you have what will defend you. The goddess of the French, soon to be the goddess of the whole universe, has given you the gift of prodigies and miracles; at a word, you have converted the land into saltpetre. If our enemies should touch, with sacrilegious foot, the land of liberty, speak, and our arms, that have known how to make saltpetre, will know how to exterminate them," &c. &c.

It is needless to say a speech like this was followed with explosions (if not of gunpowder, it was too precious), yet with reiterated explosions of applause, "that fulmined over Greece to Macedon, and Artaxerxes' throne." But what a characteristic mode of proceeding have we here, in a business of such consequence at the time, as the providing themselves with gunpowder! It is the style and manner of these scenes that I wish you to note.

We will now go on to other matters. Danton, you remember, perished, a victim to the jealousy and low hatred of Robespierre; you remember how great an idol he once was of the Jacobins and of the people. But immediately after his fall comes a deputation from the popular society of the ci-devant St. Denis, to felicitate the Convention on the vigorous measures adopted against the conspirators (meaning Danton and his friends); and the president, Tallien, addresses them in the following strain: "Bread," he begins, "bread, iron, saltpetre, and the virtues (strange company for the virtues), such is all that is wanted to make a people happy and free; and notwithstanding all the machinations of Austria, &c. &c. we shall have bread, iron, saltpetre, and the virtues." After showing how this is to come to pass with respect to the former vulgar articles, bread, iron, and saltpetre, he adverts to

the virtues, the proper production of which seems not so obvious. "Immoral men," says the citizen Tallien (the model of morality), "immoral men (meaning his own former friends, Danton and his associates) have wished to destroy amongst us all the germs of virtue, &c. &c.; they have wished to find every where among us the propagators of their doctrine, destructive as it is of all social order; but the National Convention, faithful echo of the wish of the French people, and interpreter of its sentiments, has proclaimed," says Tallien, "the eternal principles of justice and of reason, has declared that virtue and probity are the order of the day; and immediately have disappeared all the men that were only known by their immorality, their vices, and their uselessness: it is in vain that they wish to raise their head; the people has judged them, has thought proper to reduce them to silence, and the will of the people the Convention will take care to respect." This is the strain of the moral Tallien.

But again. You remember (I must repeat) what was once Danton; now, only three days after his execution, he is described in the Convention, by his brother Jacobin, Couthon, "as the infamous Danton, of whom we and the people," said Couthon, "have been so long the dupes; who was going to proclaim the tyranny, which he has affected so long to combat with; an hypocrisy so perfidious," &c. &c. And from Lyons comes an address, signed by Fouché and the revolutionary commissioners there, "that the people were to have been deceived by Danton and his friends," &c. &c.; "but thanks to your vigilance," continues the address, "citizen colleagues, humanity shall not have to mourn over errors so deplorable, calamities which ages could not repair. Liberty shall not be covered with even one drop of blood; the tombs which vice, corruption, and crime have dug for the virtues, will contain only the foul remains of conspirators," &c. &c.

And now, as if these moral effusions were never to end, not long after, when there were in the different prisons seven thousand people, Collot d'Herbois rises in the Jacobin Club to complain that he had been misrepresented in one of the public prints, as if he had said that it was painful to observe the order of the day in favour of virtue and probity. "No," said this model of every good quality, "I never said that it

was painful to occupy ourselves with justice and with probity; and I cannot suffer myself to be so misrepresented. It is painful, indeed, to have to develop the turpitudes of traitors and of the factious, &c. &c. but I could not speak thus of the order of the day." So tremblingly alive, it seems, was the moral sense of this executioner of the inhabitants of Lyons, this hero of the Jacobins of the Convention, this bloody minister of the Reign of Terror.

On turning over the very next leaf of the Moniteur (April 15, 1794), we pass from the moral indignation of Collot d'Herbois to the report of the commissioners at Lyons: its labours are terminated; one thousand six hundred and eighty-two people have been put to death. "And such," they say, "is the result of the painful labours of the tribunal, which had only been established for five months." A pious wish is then expressed, "that royalists and aristocrats may be thus taught that the sovereignty of the people is never to be outraged with impunity, and that for those who so presume, nothing is to be left but despair and the night of the tomb."

It is always in a high strain of morality that these Jacobins express themselves. Collot d'Herbois defends himself before the Convention and the Jacobin Club always in the same manner. At a sitting of the latter, in February, 1794, "It is not," says he, "to be a patriot to think more of one's self and one's sensibility than of one's country." The same defence he produces even for the revolutionary tribunal: "For four months," says he, "has it been sacrificing to the country; for it is to make great sacrifices to forget one's physical sensibility for the sake of thinking only of one's country; yet such," he continues, "are the men who are called ambitious and despotic." Certainly Collot d'Herbois is right in supposing that the public was not aware of the sensibility of the revolutionary tribunal, or even of his own. After a few Moniteurs you will find him announcing to the world, in the following manner, the moral merits of this great concentration of all the excellences of the human character, this revolutionary tribunal. "The National Convention," he says, "has declared that virtue and probity are the order of the day: it gives in charge to the popular societies to be the apostles of this beautiful doctrine; none can be more worthy. It is not vain

words," he continues, "that are pronounced by this memorable decree; we dissemble not, that there may be charlatans in virtue as in patriotism, but we shall unmask them. It is not only in pompous discourses and in a neglected costume that virtue and probity can be found, but in good actions; the virtuous man is the good father, the respectful son, the tender husband (I translate from the very Moniteur where the divorces to the marriages were about one to five), the sincere friend, the good citizen. Again, a few Moniteurs after (April 16, 1794), the considerate Collot d'Herbois concludes his discourse by assuring his hearers (the Jacobins), "that the Convention and the committee are one and the same; that Pitt would in vain give a great price to have it otherwise; that men of every description of virtue might and did find their place, some in the modesty of their virtues and in silence (it was in Paris, and in the Jacobin club he was speaking), some in their activity and energy; that the people knew the talents, the force, the faculties of every one, satisfied, if they were but employed in the cause of liberty; that no government could be contrived, more central or more powerful; that other governments sought to make friends; that in theirs every one forgot his friends, his relatives, his interests, the most dear, to think only of his country and of the happiness of the people; that other governments, the destroyers of liberty, were, therefore, ranged against them; that it was in the virtues they were to find their constitution," &c. &c.

In two months after, June, 1794 (11 Messidor), the same enlightened sage and interpreter of the virtues of individuals, and of government, assured the Convention in one of his harangues (and this was about the time when Robespierre, by his daily executions, was exhibiting in practice the theories of the moralist), that the Revolution was but the constant and daily exercise of the austere and productive virtues. "How strong is a people," he said, "that possess millions of families of this description! where is found a vigorous hatred of crime; a horror of wicked men; a love of public virtues, of private virtues also; devotion to country..... Tyrants and their satellites must hence await their destruction; the heart of a tyrant is a bottomless abyss of crimes ..... but of good citizens is an inexhaustible source of all the virtues that regenerate the human species," &c. &c.

The strain of the other Jacobins and members of the National Assembly was the same. At the end of March, 1794, in answer to a deputation from a popular society, the president of the Convention thus announces the character of the good citizen: "To serve one's country," he says; "to know, to sacrifice one's life to it and one's fortune; to comfort the unhappy; to be faithful to engagements; never to deviate from a morality the most severe; and to do good with modesty; such is the probity and the virtue which the National Convention has made the order of the day." This was about the time of the fall of Danton, when the members of the Convention were rather showing their sense of probity and virtue, by putting each other to death, than by declamations of the above kind. In a few pages after you will see the Moniteurs report the execution of the friends of Danton, of Fabre D'Eglantine, Chabôt Camille Desmoulins, the horrible reply the last made when asked his age, Hérault de Sachelles, &c. &c. In the Moniteur of the 29th of May, 1794 (10th Prairial), you will see more to the same effect. But again, Robespierre and Collot D'Herbois had proceeded in the path of virtue with such success, that at last an attempt was made to assassinate either or both of them, and the latter narrowly escaped. You will see the account in the histories. This attempt was, as is always the case, on every account to be lamented: great advantage was taken of it, as you may suppose, by Robespierre. "For myself," said Robespierre, at a sitting of the Jacobins, "I also see no necessity for living, but to virtue and to providence. I find myself more than ever independent of the wickedness of man. Base agents of tyranny, strike! we wait your stroke; calculate with what facility some hundreds of oppressors may bury their murderous sword in the heart of one good man, who has no other defence but his virtues, the vigilance of the people, and providence. But think of the magnitude of your crimes; expect the judgment of the people and of providence: you will escape neither the one nor the other."

This from Robespierre, while in the height of his bloody career, about two months before his fall, with a great deal more in the same strain; certainly expressed by him with great eloquence and ability, and of course highly applauded.

But now to turn to a more general subject.

Some notion of the state of society, and of the manners of a country, may be always collected from observing their spectacles, their dramas, &c. These are not announced in the first Moniteurs for 1793. Until towards the end of February, only four or five public places are mentioned. In April, however, the number increase, and afterwards, as the Revolution and the year proceeded, the list of the theatres and of the performances not only increased in number, but assumed a more revolutionary character. For instance, to the Théâtre National and Théâtre de la République, were added Théâtre de la Montagne, and Théâtre des Sans-culottes. We have now as a spectacle, "Miltiades at Marathon;" "The Arrival of the First Requisition on the Frontiers;" "The New Era." In a few weeks after, in December, 1793, "The Cry of the Nation;" "The Fortunate Decree;" "The Last Judgment of the Priests." Afterwards, "The Perfect Equality;" "The Crimes of the Noblesse in the Feudal Régime;" "The Counter-revolutionists judged by themselves;" "All Greece, or the Power of Liberty;" "Marat under ground, or the Day of the 10th of August;" "The Taking of Toulon;" "The Folly of George, or the Opening of the Parliament of England;" "The Crimes of Kings;" "The History of the Human Race, or Nature avenged by Liberty;" grand pantomime, "Priests and Kings;" "The Civil Feast;" "Perfect Equality;" "The Crimes of Feudality;" "The Death of Marat;" "Horatius Cocles" (very often); "The Shipwreck, or Kings on the Isle of Reason; "Demosthenes;" "Brutus," a tragedy, J. J. Rousseau; "The French Brutus, or the Republican Father;" "People and Kings, such as they were;" "The Tribunal of Reason;" "The true Sans-culottes;" "The Offspring of Liberty;" "J. J. Rousseau in his last Moments;" "J. J. Rousseau, the Infancy of." At the Opéra National, "William Tell;" "The Reunion of 10th August, or Inauguration of French Republic." Such were the spectacles of the period. I selected them at hazard from different Moniteurs, during the years 1793 and 1794, to the fall of Robespierre.

Again. As another specimen of the morals and manners of this period, in the Moniteur of the 25th November, 1793, page 263: "A Roman," says Merlin de Thionville, "founded the republic, by causing to flow the blood of his sons, who

had conspired her ruin; but on this day more than six hundred republicans have come before us, come, to demand that the national vengeance shall fall upon the guilty heads of their children. Tremble, tyrants of the north; this heroic act," &c. &c. "Never," says Thuriot, "never was an image presented grander or more worthy of a republican people. Brutus was by his office obliged to condemn to death his sons; but here we have the fathers of families, simple individuals, voluntarily forming a jury to judge their children. Conceive (he says) to what a pitch must now be carried the love of our country. Where is the man, whose heart does not beat with transport, when he sees that fathers, not at the proof, but at the mere appearance of treason, start up to demand vengeance to be exercised on their sons." .... I vote that their address be inserted in the Bulletin, placed in the table of heroic virtues;" which was ordered by the Convention amid loud acclamations. Another section with a similar address and similar honours followed: "Like so many Brutuses we say, lead our sons to death."

We may now advert to another subject, the war that was waged first against Christianity, then, against all religion whatever. Strange appearances of this kind, totally unexampled, the first in the history of Europe, the second in the history of civilized man, are to be seen on the face of the Moniteurs (the official gazette, you will always remember, of the country). The first attack was made against the common calendar, as it exists among the Christian countries of the world; for instance, in the Moniteur of the 17th December, 1793, you will see an account of the alteration of the calendar, which is quite characteristic: "The vulgar era, it seems, was the era of cruelty, of deception, of perfidy, of slavery; and has ended with royalty, the source of all our woes. The Revolution has new-tempered the soul of the French; every day forms them to republican virtues. Time opens a new page to history, and in its new course, majestic and simple, as equality itself, it should inscribe with a 'pencil,' new and pure, the annals of regenerated France ..... The French Revolution, energetic in its means, vast and sublime in its results, will form for the historian and the philosopher one of those grand epochs that are placed, as so many beacons, in the eternal route of ages." And then it seems, "The 21st of September

was the day when the Convention met and abolished royalty, and this day should be, therefore, the last of the vulgar era. . . . . And the 22nd, which was the first of the republic, should be the first of the new era . . . . . And as the equality of days and nights was marked in the heavens, so is the civil and moral equality of mankind by the Convention . . . . . And as the sun then illuminated two poles, and thus the whole globe, so the torch of liberty has illuminated . . . . . And as the sun passed from the one hemisphere to the other, so on the same day has the French people passed from monarchy to republicanism, trampling over the oppression of kings," &c. &c.

Every thing respecting the year was, therefore, now to be altered; it was to be broken up into decades; the seventh day, the Sunday of the Christian world, abolished; and the six supernumerary days of the year were to be set aside, not to be considered as the refuse of the calendar, but to be dedicated to high fêtes and festivals: one, to the fête of virtue; to the fête of genius, a second; and the whole six were to receive the highest title of honour which the Convention thought it was in their power to bestow. They were to be called "the sans-culottides," or the days without breeches.

The Assembly further declared, that so many concurring circumstances (such as we have slightly alluded to, which you will find regularly drawn out in the Moniteur), had impressed a religious and sacred character on this epoch; one of the most distinguished, they said, in the revolutionary annals, and that must be one of the most celebrated in the fêtes of future generations. These are the words of the French nation, and their revolutionary leaders in November, 1793.

A few years are passed, and we hear no more of their new calendar and new era. Such is the vanity of man, more particularly of revolutionary man, when, not content to watch the opportunities and progress of things, and calmly, and therefore permanently improve, he starts up, fierce and heated, from the collision of contending passions, and, amid the enthusiasm of revolutionary theories, presumes to renovate the world, and forms, what he calls, a new era for the succeeding generations of mankind.

But the articles respecting the abolition of the Christian

worship are still more memorable. I will endeavour to give you some general notion of them. In the Moniteur of the 9th of November, 1793, appears an account of the sitting of the 17th Brumaire. "I announce to the Convention," says the president, "that the constituted authorities of the department of the commune of Paris accompany to the bar the bishop of Paris, Gobel, the vicars and many of the curés of Paris, and that they demand an audience." Gobel then comes forward and makes his declaration: "But now," says he, "that the end of the Revolution approaches, now that there is no need of any national worship but that of liberty and equality, I renounce my functions of minister of the Catholic religion, my vicars do the same; and we place on your bureau our letters of ordination: may the example consolidate the empire of liberty and equality. 'Vive la république!'" These cries were loudly encored by the members and the spectators. Then came different curés. The president assures them that they are worthy of the republic, as they came to abjure error, and deposit on the altar of their country the ensigns of superstition, and as they are no longer desirous of preaching any thing but the practice of the social and moral virtues, a worship most worthy of the Supreme Being, and that they are worthy of Him. The president and the ministers go on interchanging speeches of this kind. "I have for twenty years," says one of them, "exercised the functions of Protestant minister; I declare that I will profess them no longer; that I will hereafter have no other temple but the sanctuary of the laws; no other divinity but liberty; no other worship but that of my country; no other gospel but that of the republican constitution." The speech continued in this strain, and was followed by loud applauses; and in subsequent Moniteurs come addresses from different bishops and ministers, in different parts of the kingdom, to the same effect, accompanied by the same applauses. In the Moniteur of the 13th of November appears a Hymn to Liberty, to be sung when the metropolitan church was to be converted into the Temple of Reason:

"Descend, Liberty, daughter of Nature,
The people has re-conquered its power immortal," &c. &c.

And in the middle of the same Moniteur it is voted, that the metropolitan church of Notre Dame shall be hereafter called "the Temple of Reason." The motion is carried. The Goddess of Reason is brought into the Convention, seated by the side of the president, &c. &c. amidst the loudest applauses; a speech is made by Chaumette: "Fanataeism," he says, "has let go its hold; the people (he says) have cried, 'No more priests, no more gods, but those whom Nature offers;'" &c. &c. and the scene ends by the Convention marching in a body mixed with the people, in the midst of the transports and acclamations of an universal joy, to chaunt the Hymn of Liberty in the church of Notre Dame, now the Temple of Reason. But this is not all. In the Moniteur of the 19th of November appears the sitting of the 27th Brumaire, in which may be found a speech from Anacharsis Clootz, who declares, that he preached aloud, that there was no other God but nature; no other sovereign but the human race; that the people is the Deity—*le peuple, Dieu.* The speech is almost a column and a half long, and the Convention orders it to be printed, and sent to the departments.

Facts of the above kind, but with long enumeration of attendant ceremonies and circumstances, appear on the face even of the Moniteurs; so that what we have heard of the public abolition of Christianity, and of all religion, was quite true; and in the historians you will see the particulars regularly given. I stop to mention, as I leave the subject, that this order of things was effected by Hébert and others, the lowest and wildest of the Jacobin party. It continued in force for several months; but you will have afterwards to observe a very remarkable turn that was made on this subject by Robespierre, when this party was destroyed by him and its leaders executed. But of this subject I shall speak in a subsequent lecture.

I will now advert, in the last place, to the imprisonments and executions of this Reign of Terror, from October, 1793, to the end of July, 1794, the period of the fall of Robespierre. The number of the prisoners gradually increased. In the Moniteurs I observed the following notices. The number of the prisoners in Paris was:

1793.	Oct. 16	2711	1794.	April 17	7541
	Nov. 25	3471		25	7674
	Dec. 16	4338		28	7840
1794.	Jan.	4669		May 4	6009
	Feb. 20	5540		16	7084
	28	5829		June 7	7089
	April 2	6863		July 8	7502
	11	7007			

Think of such a number as four, five, six, and seven thousand people confined in different places of security in Paris, through the first half of the year 1794; while such numbers were every day taken to the guillotine, more, I believe, than the Moniteurs mention. In the spring of 1794 the executions had become very dreadful.

Again. The articles of accusation were always of the most vague nature. In the Moniteur of the 1st of November, 1793, for instance, appears only the following notice: "Paris, 10 de Brumaire. Yesterday, at eleven o'clock in the evening, the trial of Brissot and his accomplices (the Gironde party) was terminated. The jury, having declared itself sufficiently informed, has unanimously answered to the questions proposed by this president, that there has existed a conspiracy against the unity and indivisibility of the republic, against the liberty and safety of the French people." Brissot and Vergniaud, Gensonné and other Girondists, in all to the number of twenty-one, are then named, and ordered to execution; nothing more. On other occasions the words are as follows: "convicted of a plot against the people, tending to the destruction of the republic, in holding criminal intelligence with the enemy, furnishing them with succours of money," &c. &c.; or, "convicted of plots tending to dissolve the national representation, and re-establish royalty;" or, "convicted of conspiracy against the people, tending to favour the success of the party of the late king, Louis XVI.; to cause the re-establishment of royalty by counter-revolutionary cries; holding correspondencies with emigrants." 13 Prairial, nine were condemned to death, "convicted of having conspired against the people, either in concealing money in the ground, to have it ready for the enemy, or to keep it from the researches of the nation, or of maintaining an intelligence with the enemy

to succour them; or in holding discourses tending to vilify and dissolve the national representation." Again,—"accused of having endeavoured to destroy the republic, dissolve the representation, restore royalty, of having held counter-revolutionary principles."

In these terms are drawn up the accusations that I observed in the different Moniteurs of the different people executed. On the 5th of Floreal (April), 1794, forty-five were condemned, four acquitted; on the 9th, thirty-three condemned, and five acquitted; on the 11th, twenty condemned; on the 16th, thirteen; on the 17th, twenty-four; on the 18th, ten; on the 19th, eighteen, the celebrated chymist, Lavoisier, included. On the 20th Prairial, Robespierre makes his speech on the subject of religion, acknowledges the existence of the Deity, the immortality of the soul, presides at a fête to the Supreme Being, this on the 20th; but on the 15th are executed thirty-two; on the 16th, sixteen; on the 17th, six; on the 18th, twenty-one; on the 19th, twenty-one; on the 20th, the day of the fête, there seems to have been a pause, and on the 21st are executed twenty-three; on the 23rd, twenty-two; on the 24th, seventeen; on the 25th, twenty-two; on the 27th, eighteen; and on the 28th, forty-two; on the 29th, sixty-one; on the 1st Messidor, eighteen, and so on; on the 25th, thirty-eight, and on the 27th, thirty, of every condition and of every age. Thus, on this 25th of Messidor, with respect to the ages, I observed them to be thus: fifty-seven, eighteen, forty-nine, twenty-six, twenty-three, fifty-one, forty-seven, sixty-five, fifty-three, twenty-two, twenty-two, forty-five, forty-four, seventy-five. On the 21st, when twenty-five were condemned, among them appears "Anne-Elizabeth Capet, aged thirty, born at Versailles, sister to the last tyrant." In the mean time, along with these executions, always appears in the next column a list of ten or twelve places of public amusement. On the 5th Thermidor, a few days before the fall of Robespierre, there is seen in the Moniteur of the 18th, a long list of fifty-nine people put to death; on the 6th, another of thirty-six, and one more condemned; on the 7th, thirty-eight; on the 8th, fifty-three; forty-five on the 9th; and then at length and at last the list for the 10th of Thermidor begins with the horrible name of Robespierre, aged only thirty-five; and this is fol-

lowed by the names of Couthon, Henriot-Dumas, ex-president of the revolutionary tribunal, and St. Just, the demon of the Revolution, only second to Robespierre, and only twenty-six.

Such are some of the particulars I observed in the Moniteurs from Jannary, 1793, to the fall of Robespierre. Now the question is, when such particulars can be presented to you, merely as a sort of slight extract from the whole, what are you to think of scenes that were really taking place in Paris and in France at the time—what of the people—what of the Jacobins—what of the state, to which the new opinions had in their progress at last advanced? Orators may exaggerate, party writers may misrepresent, but I have been quoting and referring to the common daily paper, to the official gazette of the country; and I must again repeat to you, that from want of time, I so mutilate and abridge in every way these most extraordinary documents, that I do no proper justice to them; and whatever impression they may have made on your minds, no adequate impression can have been possibly produced upon you, as yet, or ever will, unless you cast your eye over these columns, as I have done, and suffer your imagination and reflection to follow up into their legitimate consequences the simple, undeniable facts, that appear before you. I say nothing, if they are such to read, what they must have been to witness.

LECTURE XLI.

REIGN OF TERROR.

SOME further notice of this singular period, and of the effects produced by the system of terror, may be collected from different publications that appeared about the time. I shall proceed in this lecture to allude to some of them. The historians, however, have availed themselves of such memoirs, pamphlets, and other political writings as were fitted to illustrate their subject; and you will be presented with many incidents of this nature while you are reading the accounts they give.

I will allude, in the first place, to a few of the particulars that have been given relative to the behaviour of these victims of the Reign of Terror during their confinement in different prisons, and while expecting every day a summons for their trial, or rather their sentence of death.

These particulars are very descriptive of the French character, and very alien from our own; our own, sober, pensive, and dull; even in our hours of social intercourse and festivity, little disposed to be entertained, and still less to entertain; and though bearing afflictions and calamities with proper fortitude, from a sense of duty and religion, never inclined in the least to under estimate them; always fully asserting our right, whenever we have it, to be out of spirits and disagreeable, and certainly little comprehending that happy facility with which the Frenchman can conform to his situation; that eternal gaiety, which seems never to desert him, be the scene what it may—a disastrous campaign, a field of battle, the privations of poverty, the horrors of a prison, even the impending stroke of the guillotine.

Amongst the papers of Mallet du Pan was found a note

which he had taken of a conversation that had passed between himself and M. Portalis. It has been communicated to me by his son, and I will read it to you, as not only in itself curious, but as it will contribute to give a greater authority to similar accounts, which you will read in the historians.

M. Portalis and his son had been confined for fourteen months in the Maison de Santé (House of Recovery) of Bel Homme, in the Fauxbourg St. Antoine at Paris, which had been converted into a prison: certain facilities were given in these houses which could not be had in the common prisons, and it was a sort of favour to be admitted there. Among the persons confined at Bel Homme were several of the principal noblesse of Brittany: M. de Boisgelin, formerly president of the States of that province; M. de Noyant also, a considerable man at Rennes; M. de Nicolai, president of the Chambres des Comptes in the Parliament of Paris, was also there. The utmost punctilio was observed among these personages; regular introductions were necessary to be admitted into the different circles. The noblesse kept apart, and did not mix with the roturiers. M. de Nicolai, who suffered after a few months' detention, had brought from his house a part of his library, some furniture, and two thousand bottles of wine; other wealthy individuals had followed his example. After breakfasting in their apartments, every one dressed about eleven o'clock, and walked for some time in the gardens, when the weather permitted. Two o'clock was the dinner hour. A traiteur had the custom of the house. At three o'clock, the messenger of death entered the prison, and summoned his victims. A general gloom and apprehension preceded this appalling moment; but as soon as the unfortunate individuals, whose last hour had struck, had taken leave of their friends, all was life again at Bel Homme.

At four o'clock, a second and more careful toilet took place; the different circles met, and the evening was spent much in the same manner as if the same parties had assembled, in happier hours, at their respective hotels, in drinking tea, playing cards, trictrac, and conversation.

The fearful situation of the inmates of this half-way house to the guillotine had not in any manner softened their old

political prejudices and resentments; and on one occasion, when a former intendant of Brittany, who had quarrelled with the provincial states, was brought in, and a question arose whether he should be admitted into M. de Boisgelin's circle, a meeting of several members of the states was held at old de Noyant's, when it was resolved that they would not give their votes at the next election to M. de Boisgelin, if he visited the intendant; which threat had the desired effect. Linguist, the factious and eloquent Paris advocate, was at Bel Homme. The parliament people all shunned him, and he lived in a sort of solitude, amidst the dissipation of the place. On the day when his summons was brought, he came to the apartment of M. Portalis, with the warrant in his hand, to ask him whether he was required to attend under an act of accusation, or only as a witness. Portalis, who knew the form of these instruments, told him that his own trial was coming on. He received the intelligence with composure, went and dressed himself, took some refreshment with his wife, and left the prison never to return. These scenes were of daily occurrence, save on the Decadi, during which day the revolutionary tribunal did not sit, and the guillotine suspended its toils. From the evening preceding the Decadi to the morning following, was therefore a respite, and the schoolboys enjoyed their holiday, as if the hand of the executioner was for ever stayed. These very people left their frivolities for the scaffold, with such stoical unconcern, that the Committee of Public Safety became apprehensive of the effect, which such unheard of fortitude might have on the people. In some prisons, therefore, the persons, whose fate was decided, were kept on bread and water for several days previously to their execution, and a proposal was actually made in the Committee of Public Safety to bleed their victims previously to their appearing in public.

Again. In the History of Montgaillard, under the head of July, 1794, it is mentioned that a state of the prisons gave a list of eleven thousand four hundred people detained. "In many of the thirty-two places," he says, "that were converted into prisons, the later comers were so crowded together, that they suffered from mere want of air, were deprived of all exercise, and almost power of motion, and were like the

unhappy Africans in a slave ship. Yet," he continues, "our captives have sustained their lot, not so much with patience and resignation, as with a sort of annihilation of all moral sentiment and feeling, quite impossible to conceive. In these thronged and fetid receptacles, in these habitations of gloom, dissipation and play seemed their only consolation, and the sole object of their thoughts. So inadequate were their own internal resources for their support, so necessary was it to escape from themselves. Is it possible to believe," he continues, "yet nothing can be more true, than that the ladies at the Luxembourg prison contrived to amuse themselves by acting the guillotine. Three chairs were so placed, that the middle one could represent the slide of this instrument of death; and when a lady had been sufficiently practised to fall upon the chair and go through her execution with facility and grace, a circle of spectators was formed, and clapping of hands and shouts of 'Bravo! Bravo!' announced the general satisfaction at the elegance of the performance. When little accidents happened, the entertainment was only the greater.

"It is to be observed, too, that amongst their prisoners, all destined alike to the scaffold, the utmost etiquette and all the forms of customary vanity were scrupulously observed. M. le Comte, Madame la Marquise, never addressed each other without giving their titles: these ceremonies were as much practised in the prisons as they would have been in the Faux-bourg St. Germain. Did a turnkey, indeed, appear, still more an agent of the police, then, no doubt, the term citizen and citizeness were pronounced before the cut-throat readily enough. But in these places of confinement, so justly called the vestibules of death, the courtiers, the titled people of rank, formed their own society apart, and never mixed themselves with those of any inferior condition, except when compelled by particular circumstances, or the mere localities of their situation; or above all, when they had some favour to ask, or some accommodation to procure, in which case the fraternity and the sans-culottism were complete. The detenûs of this higher class expended on the table such sums as they could yet command; and in several of the prisons the jailers might have supposed that all the world was assembled at their dinners, where no provisions but of superior quality

were to be found. Was one of the detenûs too poor to provide for his own subsistence, the jailer always anticipated his case, and put him under the protection of one of the higher class; and the latter, many of them nobles, estimated, plausibly enough, their relative rank in their prisons by the number of Sans-culottes whom they now maintained, as they had before done in the world by the number of horses they had kept, their dogs, their lacqueys, or their mistresses."

The historian Thiers gives a similar account: that the detenûs, after attending to their own little concerns in the morning, assembled in the evening in a common room; groups were formed near a table, a stove, or a fire-place; they worked, they read, they chatted with each other; poets recited their verses and musicians gave their concerts; the ladies dressed; and friendships were formed, and love was made, and on the very brink of the scaffold all the scenes of society went on just as usual. Such is the account of the historian.

What are we to say of the actors in such extraordinary scenes; to despise or to admire?—despise the frivolity of mind, that can be insensible to every consideration that is fitted to affect a thinking being; or admire the elasticity of spirit that can rise triumphant over every thing that we ourselves should think fitted to overwhelm us, as far as this world is concerned, with melancholy or despair?

One prison, it is to be observed, was different from the rest, the Conciergerie. Here, those who were detained were only kept a few days during the interval between their sentence and their execution; yet even here, and under every privation, and during the last moments of existence, the relish for amusement still survived.

The revolutionary tribunal and the guillotine became objects of pleasantry. The Girondists spouted and acted dramas of the most singular and terrible nature, of which the subjects were their own fate and the Revolution. At midnight, and when the jailers were at rest, these melancholy recreations began. They made imitations, for instance, in fiction, of what had but too serious a reality; they instituted a revolutionary tribunal; became the judges and the jurors: one of them was Fouquier Tinville, the public accuser, another

the person tried, another his defender. Sentence of death was always of course pronounced, and the process of execution gone through in all its most minute details. After many of these executions, the public accuser himself was accused, and executed in his turn. Returning soon after, and covered with a white sheet, he related the tortures he had endured in the infernal regions; prophesied what would be their fate to the unjust judges, who were supposed before him, and seizing hold of them, with the most hideous cries, affected to drag them along with him to the hell, from which he had just emerged.

"It was thus," says Riouffe, one of those who were present, "it was thus that we indulged in pleasantry, even in the very jaws of death, and figured out the truth and prophesied the future in the midst of our spies and our hangsmen."

I have mentioned to you, that various memoirs and publications connected with the events and characters of the day appeared at this particular period. I will now allude to a collection of this kind which I have seen. One of these volumes is entitled, "Accounts rendered to the Sans-culottes of the French Republic by the most high, puissant, and most expeditious the Lady Guillotine, Lady of the Carrousel, the Place of the Revolution, the Grêve, and other Places; containing the Names and Surnames of those to whom she has granted Passports for the other World, &c." Then follows a facetious preface; but what a subject for wit and pleasantry! describing the joys and regrets, the sensibilities, the hopes and expectations of the Lady Guillotine; that she would be most happy to put an end to the wickedness and perversity of mankind; that there are many she could have wished to have locked in her embrace, but that their familiar, the devil, had carried them away from her; that she would be well pleased to have them restored to her; that she longs for the head of a pope, that a tiara in her panier would have the most capital effect; that her labours are imperfect, a couple of crowned heads indeed, a cousin of the tyrant, but that she wishes to see on her favourite plank ALL the tyrants of the earth, &c. &c.

Then follows an account of different trials, shortly given; and after one hundred and ninety pages a second part, with

another facetious preface, that the Lady Guillotine has a dearly beloved sister, at Lyons, that has acquired considerable celebrity; that she is rather jealous of the rapidity of her performances, &c.; that she has also a younger sister at Bourdeaux, but who is somewhat indolent; that she means to call her to account, it being so delightful to exterminate aristocratic vermin, and she, the eldest sister, has naturally so much at heart the felicity of the republic, &c. &c.

After about one hundred and ninety pages more appears a third part, the picture of the guillotine on the one side, the title page on the other,—Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, or Death—by an editor, it seems, that entitles himself the Friend of the Revolution, of Morals, and of Justice. This is followed by a preface, but in a tone more grave than before. About one hundred and ninety pages are then given, containing an account of different persons that were executed, and the whole concludes with what is here entitled "The Gospel of the Day," a sort of summary of the principles on which the revolutionary system was founded and the republic left to succeed. But I see no facetiousness here. Under different heads, of "Kings of the Earth," "Law," "Citizen," "Worship," &c. the real principles on which the Jacobins proceeded are faithfully given, some of them of tremendous aspect; and the whole concludes with a long quotation, the better to explain the nature of the revolutionary government, from a "Report to the Convention, made by one of the most ardent and most virtuous Apostles of Liberty:" Robespierre is meant, and the Report is that, from which I have already made you extracts.

As this publication appeared in the midst of the Reign of Terror, when an unfortunate joke might have cost a man his life, it is not easy to say what were the real views and sentiments of the author. He sometimes seems on the very brink of expressing ridicule and detestation, but he does not; and the whole is now only a curious specimen of the dreadful nature of the period, in which a performance so singular could have appeared.

In the public library you will find many publications that have a reference to this Reign of Terror. There is a work by Prudhomme, expressly dedicated to the subject of the crimes of the Revolution.

On the fall of Robespierre the Convention formed a commission for the examination of the papers of those whom they called the conspirators; and one of their members, Courtois, was ordered to make a report. This report was published under the title of "The Papers of Robespierre," with additions. To a publication of this kind it was natural to turn with great eagerness and expectation, but on the whole I have been extremely disappointed. The preface by Courtois, as giving a general notion of the contents of the publication, may be read. Among the papers may be seen instances of the most gross and even ridiculous adulation of Robespierre, from individuals as well as societies; indeed the very words, "My dear Robespierre," addressed to such a monster of cruelty, are very startling. In other respects the papers are much what you would suppose; only not, I think, so curious or so important as in one's imagination, at least, one had pictured. You see from these papers, however, the eternal watchfulness of Robespierre. You have letters from his spies telling him how and where particular members of the Convention passed their time. You see him noting down his observations on different persons, what they were fit for, their views, their conduct. There are a few anonymous letters, among which appears one more particularly striking, which you see every where quoted, and to which I shall in a subsequent lecture allude. There are some notes on his character by Freron, in vol. i. p. 154. Some of the disgusting communications from Lyons made by Collot d'Herbois and others, are given. A curious letter appears (vol. ii. p. 129) from the editor of the Moniteur, who seems to have been in some alarm lest his journal should be proscribed with others; stating his merits with the popular party; "that Robespierre," he says, "must have remarked that he always reported the discourses of the members of the Mountain at greater length than those of others; that he had given almost entire the speeches that were made against the life of the king, and only extracts from those in his favour, to preserve the character of impartiality; that the sale of the paper had been diminished in the South and in Normandy, burnt at Marseilles, and in short, that it had every claim on the indulgence and protection of all patriots; so that we may con-

sider ourselves, while we read the Moniteur, as having the case of the popular party, at least, fully stated. At p. 156 of vol. ii. appears another celebrated anonymous letter, indicating some intention in Robespierre of withdrawing from France to some other country, "where a sufficient treasure, it is said, was lodged, and where he and his correspondent might laugh together at the part which he had played, amidst the confusion of a country as credulous of novelties as eager for them." These are among the more prominent particulars to be found in these "Papers of Robespierre," as they are entitled. In other respects you will anticipate what these volumes contain; the most disgusting sentiments, for instance, of violence and cruelty interchanged between these Jacobin correspondents. You have clearly before you the picture of a faction, composed of men of the most dreadful political enthusiasm, stopping at no enormity that they thought fitted to terrify or exterminate their opponents.

Pamphlets and political writings at the time, and many memoirs have since appeared; and of these historians have availed themselves, and have been thus furnished with many incidents to illustrate for their readers the effects produced by this Reign of Terror. Among others appeared a pamphlet written by Vilate, one of the jurymen of the revolutionary tribunal; numbers of the Old Cordelier published by Camille Desmoulins; a memoir by Meda. These works have been published by the Baudouin Freres, at Paris. The volume contains many more particulars than I can now allude to, highly deserving your attention. It is much connected with the most critical period of the reign of Robespierre, and the most striking portion of the Reign of Terror. Camille Desmoulins was one, amongst the many very extraordinary men, that appeared in the Revolution, not undeserving, from the nature of his character and talents, to be the study of any young man of genius. But before I allude to this publication, I must remind you, in as few words as possible, of the state of affairs in Paris during the spring of 1794; that you may even now, and before you read the history, sufficiently understand the allusions I may make. When the Girondists were overpowered at the end of May, 1793, the more violent members of the Jacobin faction (for "beneath the lowest deep

there was a lower deep still threatening to devour") seem to have taken the lead, and to have got possession of the public; and they so far succeeded, that before the end of the year, in November, they abolished the religion of the country, and produced doctrines that appeared to strike at the very existence of society. These were the Hebertists. But neither were these men nor their doctrines at all relished by Robespierre, Danton, and others, though they had all united in the system of terror. And again, this system of terror became so horrible, that even Danton was at last wearied and disgusted with it; and a new and a second division took place in this Jacobin party in the spring of 1794, there being at that time, in fact, three parties taking the lead and distinguishable from each other: first, Hebert, Chaumette, and the lowest of the Jacobins; secondly, Danton, Camille Desmoulins, and others, furiously opposed to them; and thirdly, the dreadful triumvirate, Robespierre with his friends St. Just and Couthon, standing rather in the middle between the two; for Robespierre was determined, if possible, to destroy Hebert and his party, because they rivalled him with the public, and so far, therefore, he agreed with Danton and Camille Desmoulins in their reprobation of the Hebertists; but the same lust for power made him equally ready to destroy Danton and his friends, when the Hebertists were removed; Danton having long filled a great space in the eyes of the populace, and being the only revolutionist who could be thought his equal or superior. Again, Robespierre, though he despised the visionary projects of Hebert, and his friends Chaumette and Anacharsis Clootz, did not at all sympathize with the sudden humanity of Danton, Camille Desmoulins, Philippeaux, and others, and was by no means disposed to relax his system of terror, or to accede to the doctrine, that it was high time that these executions should cease, that the enemy was repulsed, and that the use and meaning of such severities were on every supposition at an end.

Such was, I apprehend, the state of affairs early in the year 1794; and what the student is to observe is, the very great skill and adroitness with which Robespierre contrived, first to bring to the scaffold Hebert and his party, and afterwards, in about a fortnight, even Danton himself. All was to

be effected, and could alone be effected, by being always more popular in Paris than his opponents. And it is to this point you must always direct your attention, when you are thinking of the abilities of Robespierre; the extraordinary success with which he managed the lower public, the Jacobins and the populace of Paris.

After having thus shortly put you in possession of the leading facts, I will now turn to the Memoirs of Vilate and Camille Desmoulins, because I think the characters, conduct, and fortunes of these men may, if duly considered, convey the most important instruction to others, who are of similar temperament, fitted by their nature to be the admiration of mankind, and yet fitted by the same nature in revolutionary times to be the destruction of themselves and the community. Vilate, then, is one of the many instances that the Revolution produced, of a young man too ardent and too elevated by the generous nature of his intentions, to observe, with much care, the course he was pursuing. "The enthusiasm," he says, "of virtue and of the fair and good, the common aliment of every young and feeling mind, inflamed by the hope of the regeneration of a great people, that had been announced and promised in so splendid a manner, the sentiment of the love of humanity, all these," he says, "launched me into the revolutionary career, and led me to make a figure without my being aware of the tragic scenes that were decorated by the names of virtue. Full of the revolutionary intoxication," he continues, "I arrived at Paris in March, 1792, and I appeared among the Jacobins and the general assemblies." This was but a fatal step for a young admirer of the good and the fair; accordingly he takes part in the violent proceedings of that period, and in March, 1793, he goes secretary to a revolutionary commission sent to the South. On his return, he seems to have attracted the notice of Barrere, who gave him apartments in the Tuileries. "How impossible," he says, "to paint my joy at being lodged in the palace of the Assembly of the greatest people of the universe! I had concurred with my feeble aid in the immortal day of the 10th of August, in the brilliant triumph then obtained over the heir of an ancient monarchy, that had existed fifteen centuries. I thought myself transported with the Brutuses

and the Publicolas, into the ancient capital, after the expulsion of the Tarquins. But my imaginary happiness," he says, " was sore disturbed, for I was appointed, by the Committee of Public Safety, one of the jurymen of the revolutionary tribunal." He seems not to have at all relished the situation. He was, however, reconciled to it by Barrere, and had at last the honour, as he thought it, of being at dinner with him, Robespierre, and St. Just, at the time of the queen's trial. He mentions a few curious particulars on that subject, which you will find in the histories. " Robespierre," he then goes on to say, " did not dissemble his fears at the great number of the enemies of the Revolution." " The vessel of the Revolution," said Barrere, " cannot reach its harbour if it floats not on a sea that is dyed with blood." " It is true," said St. Just; " a nation regenerates not itself, but on heaps of dead bodies." " We may split upon two different rocks," observed Robespierre; " too great an effusion, which may revolt humanity; or, on the contrary, too little, from that false tenderness for the smaller number, which is so prejudicial to the welfare of all."

By this dinner, and by further acquaintance with this triumvirate, Vilate seems to have lost his respect for them, and to have seen " renewed," he says, " among these destroyers of the scandalous court of Louis XVI. the nocturnal orgies of Versailles, and the petit trianon." More circumstances occurred to disgust him; furious expressions from Barrere, Collot d'Herbois, &c.; the cannonades at Lyons; the excesses of the revolutionary troops; the Hebertists, and their profane processions in Paris; La Vendée, and the waves of the Loire stained with the blood of the victims, and encumbered with the dead bodies of the Noyades. These produced such an effect upon him, that when accompanied with the reveries of St. Just, whom he heard adjourning the happiness of France, till the golden age, when every man should live retired, with his acre of land and his plough, these produced such an effect upon him, that he fell dangerously ill, and narrowly escaped with his life.

These few notices will give you some notion of the work, which is not without its interest, nor even its importance, particularly if seen in the light in which I have endeavoured

already to hold it up to your view. Vilate was thrown into prison by Robespierre, and he writes, he says, to beguile the weariness of a long confinement; loaded with fetters, because he had unmasked the tyrants and discovered their plots.

We must now turn to the Memoirs of Camille Desmoulins; for his is an instance, though of the same kind, still more instructive. Vilate makes no figure in the histories of these times, but this is not the case with Camille Desmoulins, whose character, though probably much of the same nature with that of Vilate, is of a far higher intellectual cast, and on every account particularly deserving your attention. He was the young man who was the hero of the day of the 14th of July, 1789, when the Bastile was taken; had a distinguished share in the insurrection of the 10th of August, against the Tuileries; voted for the death of the king, and, as he himself expresses it, "from the 14th of July, never ceased to conspire with Danton and Robespierre against the tyrants." He was a celebrated writer of revolutionary pamphlets. "Whence," says he, "but from what I have conjectured in my publications, have you drawn your acts of accusation against La Fayette, Malouet, Mirabeau, the Lameths, Pétion, D'Orleans, Sillery, Bussot and Dumourier?" So that he had always taken the lead in the most violent measures. "I have been connected," says he, "with most part of those whom I afterwards denounced and never ceased to pursue, from the moment they changed sides. So much has my love of the republic triumphed over my personal affections." Such is his own portrait of himself, when he is stating his merits, in one of the numbers of his "Old Cordelier," and he seems to have prompted or participated in all the violent measures and atrocious faults of the Revolution; but with one exception: he did not imbrue his hands in the massacres of September. Danton was his friend, and became his idol; they suffered on the same scaffold; but, furious as he was, he did not mingle in the pollution of the massacres of September. Can a fact, like this, prepare my hearer for understanding from me that he was originally a man of humanity; that his heart, at least, was soft and tender? But what, it will be said, the associate of Danton and Robespierre, their fellow traveller through all the dreadful scenes of the Revolution, the insurrection of the

10th of August, the unpitying condemnation of the king, the proscription and execution of the Girondists, many months of the frightful measures of the Reign of Terror, a man originally of humanity and with a heart soft and tender! What meaning can be applied to words like these; and of what materials can be made, and what at last is to be thought of, that extraordinary composition, which we call the human character, if any attribute of gentleness or kindness can be associated with a man like this? Yet read the history for yourselves; the solution of the whole enigma is the nature of political enthusiasm. Read the numbers of the "Old Cordelier." Read, at all events, attentively the chapter in the 6th volume of Thiers, where Camille Desmoulins appears, and where full extracts are given from this celebrated publication. Consider the sentiments you will there find; still more, the line of conduct he was then pursuing, however late. Read his letter to his wife; and if any view of his character, at all similar to what I have suggested to you, should occur, and if, indeed, he should be thought to have been originally fitted for the exercise of the kindliest affections, turn your thoughts to the consideration of the causes that made him what he was—wit, genius, imagination: they all belonged to him, and the Revolution breaking out, they were his destruction. Ask yourselves, then, in what light should be considered these fascinating and brilliant faculties and qualities—imagination, wit, genius. Ask yourselves what they are. Alas! they are the enviable or the fatal present of nature, just as they are used. Ask yourselves, I must repeat, what they really are; reflect upon their meaning, their temptations, their responsibilities. Certainly such interesting subjects may be illustrated by the history of Camille Desmoulins. These high faculties and qualities were visited by political enthusiasm, and all was lost. There is a short memoir of him prefixed to his "Old Cordelier," and you will see ample reference made both to him and his work by the historian Thiers. A few words will be sufficient for the present, till you read this account. Camille Desmoulins had been long attached to Danton, and both had, of late, thought, that the armies of the republic being every where victorious, the cruelties that were daily exercised had become useless, and should cease. He therefore instituted a new journal,

which he entitled the "Old Cordelier" (for he and Danton had been from the first members of that celebrated and most furious club of the Cordeliers), and he directed his attack against all those later members, those *new* revolutionists, who were resolved to surpass revolutionists like himself, the older and more approved. These new members were Hebert and his followers, who seem, for some time, to have taken the lead during the latter part of 1793, and the opening of 1794, and to have urged on the system of terror even more than Robespierre himself.

The portrait, which Camille gave in his journal, of Paris, and of the injustice and tyranny that were there exercised, produced the liveliest sensation in the capital, and all over France. Fifty thousand copies of each of his numbers were sold in a few days. All were delighted to see any symptoms of humanity in a revolutionist like himself, hitherto so odious. Camille, without wishing the prisons to be opened, or the Revolution to retrograde, demanded the institution of a "Committee of Clemency," which should review the prisons, enlarge those who were detained without just cause, and stop the effusion of blood.

Writings of this kind could not but give the greatest offence to the Hebertists, and could not be relished by Robespierre, though every testimony was paid to his merits and his services to the republic, by the author, who had long been among the most ardent of his admirers. In short, the Old Cordelier was denounced at the Jacobin club, and Camille, with Philippeaux and others, had to appear at the bar, and answer for their publication.

Robespierre had no wish to ruin him; and in the club, therefore, of the Jacobins, he gave him an opportunity of escape. He said his character was excellent, but that no character, however excellent, could give him a right to draw up pamphlets against the patriots; that his writings were devoured by the aristocrats, were their delight, and were circulated all over the departments; that he must be treated like a giddy boy that had meddled with dangerous weapons, which he had made a bad use of; that he ought to quit the aristocrats and the bad company that had corrupted him; and that while he might be himself pardoned for such writings,

they must all be burned. "To burn them, is not to confute them," said the hot-headed author, forgetting whom he was addressing,—a demagogue, how proud and how unforgiving! "Well then," replied the irritated Robespierre, "let them not be burned, but let them be answered for; let them be read out here instantly. As Camille chooses to be so, let him be covered with infamy; and let not the society restrain its indignation. As he persists in maintaining these diatribes and dangerous principles,—the man who holds so fast to such perfidious writings, is, perhaps, something more than wrong-headed"—Camille strove in vain to obtain a hearing, and to calm Robespierre.

Robespierre despised Hebert and his associates too much to embroil himself with them; but not so Camille Desmoulins, a writer so celebrated in the Revolution, and who had not the address to avoid a rupture with him. The result was, as you may conceive, that Camille was involved in the fall of Danton, arrested and sent to the Conciergerie, the last stage before the revolutionary tribunal and the guillotine.

He became furious, says the history, when he read his act of accusation, loaded, as it was, with detestable falsehoods; soon after he became calm, and observed, in sorrowing accents, "I go to the scaffold for having dropped a few tears on the fate of so many of the unhappy." All the prisoners, whatever might be their rank or opinions, took the liveliest interest in his fate, and offered up the most ardent vows for his safety.

Gifted with an ardent imagination, Camille seems to have idolized the fine arts and music, and above all women of talents. One of these, M^e^. Duplessis, he married, with no income of his own but what he earned by his pen, and with an addition of about one hundred and sixty pounds per annum, which she brought him. Their union was, however, in the midst of their privations, most happy; but proud of the literary talents of her husband, she encouraged too much those dispositions in him which could not but lead to their common ruin. Young, beautiful, affectionate, and intelligent, she seems to have been one of those formed to be the charm of all who approach them; and the passion with which she inspired a man like Camille is little to be wondered at; a man of

genius and sensibility, who would naturally adore, where others could not but admire; the husband, too, of her heart, and conscious that he was so—when, alas! she saw him arrested, she was observed, at all hours, wandering before his prison; and there remains a letter, which the unhappy man addressed to her, and which, whatever may have been the faults of Camille (I deny them not), it is impossible to read without forgetting them for the time; nor even without feeling some sympathy for his afflictions and compassion for his fate. "Kind sleep," he says, "has suspended my miseries: when sleeping, at least, we are free, and are no longer sensible of our captivity. But a moment ago, and I saw thee in my dream—thee and my children, and I embraced you all in turn. It is scarcely yet light, but unable to see or hear thee more, I rise at least to speak to thee and write; but opening my windows, the thought of my solitude, these frightful bars, these bolts, which separate thee from me, have overcome all my firmness; I have burst into tears, or rather, I have sobbed whilst I have cried from my tomb, O Lucile! Lucile! my dear Lucile, where art thou? Yesterday, in the evening, I had a moment similar to this: I saw in the garden my mother, I threw myself on my knees mechanically before the bars, I put up my hands as if imploring her pity; she, who, as I well knew, poured every hour her sorrows into thy bosom. I saw her grief, her handkerchief in her hand, and dropping her veil when she could no longer support the sight of me. When you next come, seat yourself along with her, that I may see you better; there can be no danger in this; my eye glass is not very good."

He then asks her for her portrait, to make him a day of transport when he receives it in his dungeon; her hair, to lay upon his heart. He then tells her that he had discovered a chink in his apartment, had heard a groan, and recognised the voice of his friend, Fabre d'Eglantine, but that they dare not speak to each other.

"They say," he continues, "that innocence is calm, that it is courageous. Ah, my dear Lucile, my best beloved! but too often my innocence is weak, as is that of a husband, of a father, of a son. And yet were it Pitt or Coburgh that treated me thus—but my colleagues, but Robespierre, to have

signed my committal to prison—but the republic, for whom I have done so much! And this my reward for all my virtues and my sacrifices!

"Adieu, my Lucile! say adieu for me to my father; thou seest in me an example of the barbarous cruelty and ingratitude of men. O my dear Lucile! I was born to write poetry, to defend the helpless, to make thee happy, to make a paradise around us, with thy parents, and those we loved; but I dreamed about a republic, that all the world should have adored. I could not believe that men could be so furious and so unjust. How was I to think, that a few pleasantries in my writings against the colleagues, that had provoked me, could have effaced the remembrance of all my services? I die the victim of my pleasantry and my friendship for Danton. We die victims of our courage in denouncing traitors, and of our love of truth. We can carry along with us this testimony, at least, that we perish the last of the republicans. Live for my child, speak to him of me, tell him how dearly I should have loved him. Notwithstanding that I am to be publicly executed, I believe that there is a God. My blood will efface my faults; the weaknesses of humanity, and whatever there was of good in me, my virtues, my love of liberty, God will reward it. I shall see thee again; the day will come. O Lucile! O Annette! with the quick feelings that I have, can death be such a misfortune, while it delivers me from the view of all these crimes? Adieu, adieu, my life, my soul, my divinity on earth! I leave thee good friends, such virtuous and feeling men as are yet to be found. Adieu, Lucile, my dear Lucile! adieu, Horace-Annette! adieu, my father! the river of life is passing away before me; but I see thee still, my Lucile, I see thee still. I go to die."

These are paragraphs from the last letter of Camille to his wife. Soon after his execution, she was herself hurried to the scaffold, and shared his fate, amid the general sighs and lamentations of the beholders.

But what a wreck is here! what a waste of attractive and estimable qualities! what a wild and vain destruction of the virtues of the human character! Patriotism, genius, and sensibility converted, as he proceeded in his impetuous and lawless career, into tyranny, wickedness, and cruelty; and the

man formed to be the delight of others, the defender of the helpless and the guardian of his country, justly doomed to be considered by posterity as a demagogue, a blasphemer (for such he was of his Saviour), and a man of blood; dying at last because he wished to have some decency observed, some mercy shown, some pause, some truce to the sufferings of his afflicted country! Living thus, and yet dying thus, and dragging down with him into a dishonoured grave all that can be most admired and worshipped by impassioned man, the youth, the beauty, and the intelligence of a devoted woman; one who had lived but to love and honour him, and could not survive him! Yet such is the history of Camille Desmoulins.

But what are patriotism, and genius, and sensibility, if they are to be abandoned to the giddy impulses of the moment, left to follow the capricious wanderings of the imagination, or be urged on by the unlicensed impulses of political enthusiasm?

One word, as I conclude my lecture, on the subject of another extraordinary man, who appeared in these extraordinary times; one word of Danton.

Something of the praise that, however late, belongs to Camille Desmoulins, belongs also even to Danton. After following him through all the scenes of the Revolution, with horror and detestation, we at last concede to him an unexpected emotion of approbation; and it is with no pleasure that we see him fall, at least fall by the hands of Robespierre. He had got rich by plunder, had been fortunate in his marriage, and had found it better happiness to serve a beautiful woman, than the grim idol he had worshipped under the abused name of liberty. He had abandoned himself to indolence and indulgence (always his proper elements), and amid the enjoyments of the heart, his heart had been taught a lesson, and he had been awakened to the long forgotten feelings of humanity. At the foot of the scaffold he thought of her he loved, the wife of his bosom, and, stern as he was, the moment had nigh overcome him: "No weakness, Danton!" he cried; and he prepared to die.

When Lacroix was conducted with him to the Luxembourg, "For us to be arrested!" he cried: "To arrest us! I never thought of such a thing!" "Not thought of it!" replied Dan

ton; "I knew it, I had been told of it." "You knew it," replied Lacroix, very naturally; "you knew it, and did nothing! your usual indolence has been the destruction of us."

And such, indeed, was the secret of the fate of Danton. Nothing could be so able as the speech of Robespierre against him, or the report of St. Just; for nothing could be so difficult as to make out a plausible case, nothing so preposterous as a charge of treason to be brought against Danton; and well might the base and cold-blooded Robespierre rub his hands with delight, when he found, as he came up through the garden of the Tuileries, that his execution had been accomplished.

Danton was formed to be the tribune of the people: a mind capable of conceiving at any exigency a measure that should carry away the fluctuating and expectant opinions of the populace, by its daring and decisive nature; a ready, intelligent, and most impressive eloquence; a voice that was likened, by those who lived at the time, to the roaring of a wild animal, certainly one that could make a street or public square re-echo; a countenance that, like the famed head of Medusa, could petrify the beholders; and a figure that seemed to belong to some Titan of old, who could seize a mountain, as a weapon of offence, and bury an enemy beneath it. It is astonishing how such a demagogue could be attacked at all, much less overcome by such a cowardly wretch as Robespierre; that the populace could suffer their hero to be dragged to execution, the idol they had so long worshipped, and whose influence they had felt on occasions, so many and so trying.

Yet all this was done. And Danton had at last only to despise the populace, the instruments he had so often wielded to the destruction of others, and despise alike the rival who now converted them to his own. Camille Desmoulins, as they went to execution, had poured out his imprecations on the base and hypocritical Robespierre. The hired mob that surrounded their tumbrel, repaid his insults in their own opprobrious manner. Camille lost all temper. "Let them alone," said Danton, casting on them a look of cold contempt; "let them alone, the vile canaille!"

"We are sacrificed," he said on another occasion, "to a few

cowardly brigands, but they will not long enjoy their victory; I drag Robespierre after me; Robespierre follows me: these brothers of Cain (he said) know nothing about government. I leave every thing in a frightful disorder. When they arrived at the Conciergerie, they occupied the same dungeon which the Girondists had done before them, the Girondists whom they had sent there. This sort of retributive justice was often and amply experienced in the course of this memorable Revolution. "It was on such a day as this," he said, "that I instituted the revolutionary tribunal. I beg pardon of God and man; but my meaning was to have prevented a new September, not to have let loose such a scourge of humanity." Once, and once only, he showed a slight regret at having taken part in the Revolution. "Better far," he said, "to be poor and be a fisherman, than to be a governor of men."

A meeting took place between Robespierre and Danton, sought by the latter, for the purpose of an accommodation. "No doubt," said Danton, "we must keep down the royalists, but we should only strike where the cause of the republic requires; the innocent should not be confounded with the guilty." "And who told you," replied Robespierre, sharply, "that any innocent person had perished?" Danton turned to his friend who had accompanied him, and with a bitter smile, "What say you," said he, "not an innocent perished!!!" Robespierre and he then separated; and all friendship was now at an end for ever. Danton was in vain urged to exert and defend himself. "I had rather," he said, "be the one to be guillotined, than the one to guillotine." And again, "My life is not worth the trouble; I am sick of mankind."

He contented himself with insisting, that Robespierre and the committee durst not attempt his life; and with no other answer than "they dare not," in a sort of morbid indifference and indolence, he was deaf to the entreaties of his friends, and waited the event.

But Danton, by retiring awhile a short time before from the scene, had suffered his influence to part away from him. Robespierre had got possession of the Jacobins; the Cordeliers belonged to the Hebertists; and the Convention passive, spiritless, and fallen, could afford him no efficient support. Robespierre, too, had one virtue which Danton had not; he

had remained poor. He could always, therefore, represent himself as having no object but the republic; could always obtain an audience, belief for his assertions, and turn his own purity and merits to the destruction of his opponents.

The account given of Danton is every where the same, but it is best given by Thiers. He was consistent to the last, and not a word or look escaped him that was not worthy of his dreadful career and terrible renown. He appalled the president and the jury, and embarrassed the hardened Fouquier, the public accuser. "Be calm," said the president; "it is the mark of innocence." "Calm!" said Danton, "when I see myself so basely calumniated. It is not from a man of the Revolution like me that you are to expect a cold defence. Men of my temperament are, in revolutions, above all price; on their front is stamped the Genius of Liberty." Danton, at these words, assumed the port and movement of the Jupiter Olympus of the ancients; and the well known looks that had so often struck terror into the hearts of the spectators, lost not now their impression; and a murmur of approbation was heard.

"*Me!*" he cried, "accuse *me* of having conspired with Mirabeau, with Dumourier, with Orleans, of having crawled at the feet of despots!" He then detailed the main incidents of his life; his resistance to Mirabeau; his stopping the royal carriage that was going to St. Cloud; his bringing the people to the Champ de Mars to protest against royalty; his proposing the overthrow of the throne in 1792; his proclaiming the insurrection of the 10th of August; and then, suffocated with indignation, to think that he had been accused of concealing himself on that day, "Who are the men who had to engage Danton to come forward," he cried, "on that occasion? Produce my accusers! Let me unmask the three miserable beings that surrounded at that moment and ruined Robespierre. Produce them, and let them appear, that I may plunge them into that annihilation from which they shall never afterwards emerge."

Danton poured forth the thunder of his indignation till the president attempted to drown his voice by sounding his bell. Danton still went on. "Do you not understand me?" said the president. "Your bell!" said Danton; "He who is

defending his honour and his life, has a voice that must outsound your bell." But he had exhausted himself and became silent.

You will read with eagerness whatever relates to Danton; indeed, there is an unworthy interest that belongs to characters of this particular description. Energy, decision, courage, contempt of death, the power of confronting dangers, and trampling upon difficulties,—these are all so useful in the warfare of life, and indicate such a superiority of character and mind over our common nature, that our respect gets inextricably associated, even when such qualities are connected with enormous vices and atrocious conduct. We are ever ready to forget the guilt, when great capacity is shown and a fearless contempt for the common terrors of humanity; but when, as in the case of Danton, there is shown at the same time something of a nature capable of affection, of friendship, and of love, of careless gaiety, of indolence, and a taste for the relaxation of pleasure, every offensive part of the character (more particularly in cases and moments of misfortune), seems to disappear, and ruffians, and pirates, and banditti, men of desperate lives, every hour engaged in scenes of lawless outrage and bloody violence, can be rendered by a Schiller or a Byron, the idols and the delight of the gentle, the generous, and the kind, of the young and the beautiful, the studious and the retired; those who would be the first to shrink from deeds of cruelty, and sights of death, and who, of all others, are most interested in the general prevalence of peace and order, of humanity and good sense.

But this must not be. Our moral feelings must not be suffered to tolerate such men, least of all Danton, the dreadful tribune of the worst stages of the French Revolution, who scrupled not, as a mode of resistance to the allies, to institute in September a regular massacre of helpless beings of every description; whose very plan was, so to defile the people of Paris with carnage, that they might be rendered desperate; who was the relentless destroyer of a benevolent king; who was not satiated with blood, nor made to pause till he had passed through the Reign of Terror; and who turned aside from his course of violence and guilt, only that he might the better enjoy his plunder, and profit by his crimes.

NOTES.

I. Page 168.

In the fifth volume you will see a letter from Collot d'Herbois to the Convention, giving an account of his mission at Lyons. He had been attacked by Tallien after the death of Robespierre; and the object of this letter is, to justify himself from the enormities charged against him. At page 17 is a letter from Fouché to his colleague. At page 23 the instructions of Robespierre. At page 38 the Proclamation of the Committees of the Convention on the 15th of January, 1794. Then follows a letter from Collot, remarking on Tallien's conduct when sent to Bourdeaux. And next Tallien's reply, who, in defending his humanity, boasts that he had only guillotined one hundred and eight people at Bourdeaux. At page 19, the reply of the Committee of Public Safety to the suggestions (humane suggestions) that were addressed to them by the members of their own deputation, at Bourdeaux. Tallien and his colleague had remonstrated against setting fire to the houses of people and the warehouses of the merchants; and Tallien, Jacobin as he was, thus lost the favour of Robespierre. These instructions of the committee, it is melancholy to observe, are signed by Carnot, who takes his share but too often in the detestable proceedings of this period.

II. Page 168.

In the system of Jacobinism, the most striking feature, as I have often mentioned, is the frightful excess to which the new opinions were carried; and by those (some of them men of great natural ability) who were continually proposing themselves as the very models of virtue and benevolence. In my lecture on Louis XV. I represented Rousseau as the great writer, whose influence was most felt during the Revolution; and this I have since seen confirmed by M. Mallet du Pan, who was an eyewitness of the scene.

When he took refuge in England he published from time to time his Mercure, and all those of his numbers that are of a

general nature, are well deserving attention. In one of them, on the Influence of the French Philosophy on the Revolution, he considers this eminent writer as the great mover, and Diderot, as afterwards the great author of the miseries of the Revolution.

"No one," he says, "who ever heard Diderot declaim on government, on religion and the church, had afterwards any thing to learn in the Revolution. So early as 1788 (he says) he heard Marat reading and making comments on the Social Contract of Rousseau, in the public walks amid the applauses of an enthusiastic auditory. This work (he says) was the Koran of those patriots who came forward before 1789, afterwards of the Jacobins in 1790, the Republicans in 1791, and of all the most atrocious members of society."

Mallet du Pan imputes not, he says, to the generality of philosophers, the plots and the crimes which have for ten years destroyed France. Voltaire, Mably, and Rousseau, would have shrunk back with terror from the theory and practice of Jacobinism. What he accuses the philosophers of is, that they accelerated the depravation of the French, by weakening the supports of morals, by rendering the conscience an affair of reasoning, by substituting for duties, observed from sentiment, from tradition, from habit, the uncertain rules of human reason and sophisms, always at the service of the passions; of having rendered all truths problematical; of introducing a presumptuous scepticism, that led to excesses worse than could be produced by the most extreme ignorance; of having thrown into confusion every thing that time, experience, and a sound philosophy had consecrated; and of having prepared the anarchy of the state by the anarchy of the understanding. After these weighty remarks, in conclusion, he says, every age has seen great crimes, but none before, crimes public and private, made into a theory, into a system of state, and into a kind of public law, by legislators speaking in the name of reason and nature. This new species of philosophy, or fanaticism, has been hitherto unknown: it required the alliance of the doctrines of the times, with the manners of their professors, to produce the picture of a people *regenerated* by atheism, assassinations, burnings, robberies, and sacrilege; the picture of a people, whose representatives and leaders, in succession, commit not crime in a state of fury, but discuss it logically; deliberate, and study the means with care, trumpet it forth with eloquence, congratulate themselves on its success, lay it down with a kind of solemnity, execute it in cold blood, and answer with shouts of laughter to the lamentations of their victims.

III. Page 170. *Papers of Robespierre.*

"My health," says Pilot from Lyons, to a juryman of the revolutionary tribunal, "is every day establishing, by the destruction I witness of the enemies of our common country. I assure you, my friend, nothing can go on better; every day we dispose of a dozen. There are who think this tedious; but in a few days more, you will hear of two or three hundred at a time." "They go on," says Achard to the same juror, "these croakers from the marsh, till the Lady Guillotine will have to receive them all under her salutary window." This was meant by this Jacobin, probably, for liveliness and wit. Cruelty is, in its last stage of hard-heartedness, when it turns pleasant.

"More heads," says this bad man (in the opening of his next letter), "and every day more and more heads are now falling. What delight would you have experienced to have seen, the day before yesterday, the national justice exercised on two hundred and nine wretches! How majestic, how imposing, in every respect how edifying, the spectacle! what a cement for the republic! Already have more than five hundred moved off; there will be yet twice as many more, no doubt, and then ça ira," &c. &c.

Such was the tone and manner of these scourges of a great people at this afflicting period. These papers, and all papers and histories are full of instances of this nature. One of these Jacobins had a guillotine for a seal.

Sometimes the facts of history are unintentionally confirmed by correspondence of this kind brought to light, when the parties are no more. In the 3rd vol. at p. 44, there is a letter from Julien to Robespierre, which begins thus:

"I have promised you some particulars, my good friend, about Carrier and Nantes. I will tell you the evil that I have seen, and the committee must find the remedy. The union of the three great scourges, pestilence, famine, and war, now menace Nantes. An innumerable crowd of royalist soldiers were shot near the town; and this mass of dead bodies heaped upon each other, joined to the pestilential exhalations from the Loire, which is quite discoloured with blood, has corrupted the air. The national guards of Nantes were sent by Carrier to bury the dead; and two thousand people, in less than two months, have perished by a contagious malady. The navigation of the Loire has been so choked up, as not to leave it possible to bring up provisions for the consumption of our armies, and the commune is a prey to the most horrible scarcity." Such are the words of Julien in his letter to

Robespierre. Such descriptions, when found as they are every where in historians, might be thought exaggerated; but the conclusion from this letter is, that the historians have given but the mere facts.

I have mentioned to you the disgusting terms in which Robespierre was addressed. As I am turning away from these volumes, an instance presents itself at the end of the third. "Vadier, a member of the Convention, to Robespierre." The letter was written April 12th, 1794, when the Reign of Terror was at its height.

"Virtuous and generous friend, the affecting letter which you have just written me, is a precious balm to my wounded mind. I will guard it, as a glorious testimony, for nothing can be more honourable to a lover of liberty, than the friendship of Robespierre, and the inestimable regard of that incorruptible tribune of the people." "My dear colleague;" "dear and virtuous friend," "dear and illustrious colleague." such are the terms of address scattered over the letter. "We have received," he concludes, "and admired your sublime discourses: your portrait has been placed by the side of Pétion and Mirabeau, and receives the daily homage of the friends of liberty and the admirers of great men."

You will not suppose me ready to subscribe to panegyrics like these; but I have already mentioned to you, that I rate very high the talents of Robespierre, as a leader of parties, and as a controller of the minds of others. I conceive, too, that great talents were displayed by his friends and associates, St. Just and Barrère; but of these talents you will be best able to judge by looking at the "Reports of the Convention," which is a better work than the Debates of the Convention; though even this latter may serve your purpose very sufficiently.

IV. Page 173. *Memoirs of Vilate.*

"I BECAME acquainted," he proceeds to say, "with the witty, lively, intelligent, Camille Desmoulins. I saw Danton, Tallien, and many others. I dined with Danton, I was anxious for his safety, and did not disguise it; I made him many visits. Twenty times did I warn him that they were going to bring him to the guillotine. He was arrested; the Revolution, like Saturn, devoured its dearest children; for thus on a scaffold died Camille Desmoulins, the courageous man, who, on the 14th of July, 1789, leaping on a table in the Palace of Egalité, with pistols in his hands, gave the people the signal of liberty, in mounting the national cockade, and decided the capture of the Bastile." Vilate at last discovers, as

he thinks, that Robespierre is going to decimate the Convention, and he behaves imprudently; that is, he shows some proper feeling on the occasion, and he was lodged in the prison of La Force. He does not seem to have been released, even after the fall of Robespierre. "It is affliction tries the soul," he at last says, "and it is from the depth of my dungeon that, restored to the reality of the imperfection of every thing in the world, we discover the mistake of those abstract hopes of a chimerical perfection, so foreign and unknown to the passions of mankind." He was writing from this dungeon at the age of twenty-six.

After this first part follows a second, recommended like the former, by curious particulars and observations, that coming from such a man, are not a little important.

"Those are the tyrants," he says, "who, attributing the victories of the French arms to the activity of the public executions, and the horrible effusion of blood, have robbed the deputies of the country of the glory of their triumphs, and endeavoured to tarnish their laurels; who attempted to render the people cruel and ferocious, by accustoming them to the spectacle of the destruction of their fellow creatures. Those are the tyrants, who, by the effect of terror, have altered the human character; instead of confidence, and serenity, and frankness, and good faith, have filled men with dissimulation and falsehood; who have had the address to produce a general confusion of all the powers of the state, and have subjected every thing to their own will, under pretence of the sovereign will of the people; made their committees at pleasure; destroyed the national representation in detail by their arrests; and have sent their colleagues to the scaffold. What could be their meaning in all this? What but the destruction of the republic, and the establishment of their own execrable tyranny?" There is much to be found in this strain all through the second part, which is followed by many rambling and sometimes curious chapters on the subject of Catherine Theot, a visionary, that you will read of in the histories. In conclusion, he says, "In this manner have I beguiled the weariness of my long imprisonment, in unmasking the tyrants that have loaded me with fetters, because I had begun to discover their plots. Tyrants may lead youth into error, the more easily, because it has confidence in virtue; but let them learn by my example, that soon disabused and indignant at having been deceived, it will make it a point of honourable duty to unmask them to the public opinion."

LECTURE XLII.

REIGN OF TERROR.

I HAVE been now, for many lectures, endeavouring to convey to you some general impression of the system of terror—of the reign of Robespierre and the Jacobins.

I cannot suppose your minds unaffected by what you have heard.

I must now, however, call upon you to observe, in conclusion, the effect that was produced on others at the time, and, above all, the estimate that was formed of the whole by the matured mind of Mr. Burke.

The details of this dreadful portion of history you will enter into hereafter, by the perusal of proper books and memoirs; but already you must have learnt enough, even from these few lectures, to enable you to judge of the remarks I am going to read to you, from his Letters on the Regicide Peace, written in 1796. Consider, as you listen to me, how far he is or is not justified in the awful representations he has there given of this system; when you doubt, suspend your opinions till you have read and heard more.

I have before mentioned to you, that I should hold it no mean praise, if I could assist you in properly appreciating the works of this distinguished man on the French Revolution; assist you in separating the wisdom from the enthusiasm, the philosophy from the declamation, the just statement from the violence and exaggeration, which may all alike be occasionally found, it must be confessed, in his immortal pages; but it is for you to observe the one, and be not affected by the other. That he was the first to understand the state of Europe, and that he best understood it, cannot, I think, be now denied. But whether he best understood the remedy that could be best tried for this unparalleled situation of society, is quite

another question. Observe, then, the estimate he has given, and how continually every word he writes has a reference to some circumstance or other that took place at Paris, and that you have even already received some notice of, in the course of these lectures, particularly when I was alluding to the pages of the Moniteurs. "Instead of the religion and the law," says he, speaking of the French Revolutionists, "by which they were in a great politic communion with the Christian world, they have constructed their republic on three bases, all fundamentally opposite to those on which the communities of Europe are built. Its foundation is laid in regicide, in Jacobinism, and in atheism; and it has joined to those principles, a body of systematic manners, which secures their operation. I call a commonwealth regicide, which lays it down as a fixed law of nature, and a fundamental right of man, that all government, not being a democracy, is an usurpation; that all kings, as such, are usurpers; and for being kings, may and ought to be put to death, with their wives, families, and adherents." Mr. Burke then alludes to the festival of the 10th of August, as illustrating these, his representations. "Jacobinism," he continues, "is the revolt of the enterprising talents of a country against its property. When private men form themselves into associations for the purpose of destroying the pre-existing laws and institutions of their country; when they secure to themselves an army, by dividing amongst the people of no property the estates of the ancient and lawful proprietors; when a state recognises those acts, &c. &c. I call this Jacobinism by establishment. I call it atheism by establishment, when any state, as such, shall not acknowledge the existence of God as a moral governor of the world; when it shall offer to him no religious or moral worship; when it shall abolish the Christian religion by a regular decree; when it shall persecute with a cold, unrelenting, steady cruelty, by every mode of confiscation, imprisonment, exile, and death, all its ministers; when it shall generally shut up or pull down churches; when the few buildings that remain of this kind shall be opened only for the purpose of making a profane apotheosis of monsters, whose vices and crimes have no parallel amongst men, and whom all other men consider as objects of general detestation, and the severest animadversion

of the law; when in the place of that religion of social benevolence, and of individual self-denial" (you will observe these comprehensive words), "in mockery of all religion, they institute impious, blasphemous, indecent, theatric rites, in honour of their vitiated, perverted reason, and erect altars to the personification of their own corrupted and bloody republic; when schools and seminaries are founded at public expense to poison mankind, from generation to generation, with the horrible maxims of their impiety; when, wearied out with incessant martyrdom, and the cries of a people hungering and thirsting for religion, they permit it only as a tolerated evil; I call this atheism by establishment. When to these establishments of regicide, of jacobinism, and of atheism, you add the correspondent system of manners, no doubt can be left on the mind of a thinking man concerning their determined hostility to the human race. Manners are of more importance than laws; upon them, in a great measure, the laws depend: the law touches us but here and there, and now and then; manners are what vex or sooth, corrupt or purify, exalt or debase, barbarize or refine us, by a constant, steady, uniform, and insensible operation, like the air we breathe in. They give their whole form and colour to our lives, according to their quality; they aid morals, they supply them, or they totally destroy them. Of this the new French legislators were aware; therefore, with the same method, and under the same authority, they settled a system of manners, the most licentious, prostitute, and abandoned, that ever has been known, and, at the same time, the most coarse, rude, savage, and ferocious. Nothing in the Revolution, no, not to a phrase or a gesture, not to the fashion of a hat or shoe, was left to accident. All has been the result of design, all has been matter of institution. No mechanical means could be devised, in favour of this incredible system of wickedness and vice, that has not been employed. The noblest passions, the love of glory, the love of country, have been debauched into means of its preservation and its propagation; all sorts of shows and exhibitions, calculated to inflame and vitiate the imagination, and pervert the moral sense, have been contrived; they have, sometimes, brought forth five or six hundred drunken women, calling at the bar of the Assembly for the

blood of their own children, as being Royalists or Constitutionalists. Sometimes they have got a body of wretches, calling themselves fathers, to demand the murder of their sons; boasting that Rome had but one Brutus, but that they could show five hundred. There were instances, in which they inverted and retaliated the impiety, and produced sons, who called for the execution of their parents. The foundation of their republic is laid in moral paradoxes; their patriotism is always prodigy: all those instances to be found in history, whether real or fabulous, of a doubtful public spirit, at which morality is perplexed, reason is staggered, and from which affrighted nature recoils, are their chosen, and almost sole examples for the instruction of their youth. The whole drift of their institution is contrary to that of the wise legislators of all countries, who aimed at improving instincts into morals, and at grafting the virtues on the stock of the natural affections. They, on the contrary, have omitted no pains to eradicate every benevolent, noble propensity, in the mind of men. In their culture it is a rule, always, to graft virtues on vices. They think every thing unworthy of the name of public virtue, unless it indicates violence on the private. All their new institutions (and with them every thing is new) strike at the root of our social nature. Other legislators, knowing that marriage is the origin of all relations, and consequently the first element of all duties, have endeavoured, by every act, to make it sacred. The Christian religion, by confining it to pairs, and by rendering that relation indissoluble, has, by these two things, done more towards the peace, happiness, settlement, and civilization of the world, than by any other part, in this whole scheme of Divine Wisdom. The direct contrary course has been taken in the synagogue of Antichrist, I mean in that forge and manufactory of all evil, the sect which predominated in the Constituent Assembly of 1789. Those monsters employed the same, or greater industry, to desecrate and degrade that state, which other legislators have used to render it holy and honourable. By a strange, uncalled-for declaration, they pronounced that marriage was no better than a common civil contract. The same discipline which hardens their hearts, relaxes their morals. Whilst courts of justice were thrust out by revolu-

tionary tribunals, and silent churches were only the funeral monuments of departed religion, there were no fewer than nineteen or twenty theatres, great and small, most of them kept open at the public expense, and all of them crowded every night. Among the gaunt, haggard forms of famine and nakedness, amidst the yells of murder, the tears of affliction, and the cries of despair, the song, the dance, the mimic scene, the buffoon laughter, went on, as regularly, as in the gay hour of festive peace. I have it from good authority, that under the scaffold of judicial murder, and the gaping planks that poured down blood on the spectators, the space was hired out for a show of dancing dogs. The whole body of this new scheme of manners, in support of the new scheme of politics, I consider as a strong and decisive proof of determined ambition and systematic hostility. I defy the most refined ingenuity to invent any other cause for the total departure of the Jacobin republic from every one of the ideas and usages, religious, legal, moral, or social, of this civilized world, and for her tearing herself from its communion with such studied violence, but from a formed resolution of keeping no terms with that world. It has not been, as has been falsely and insidiously represented, that these miscreants had only broken with their old government; they made a schism with the whole universe, and that schism extended to almost every thing great and small."

I have quoted for you nearly the whole of these remarkable passages in Mr. Burke's Letters on a Regicide Peace, for the reasons I have mentioned. No doubt, at last the Jacobins kept no terms with the rest of the world; and such a crisis of the world was produced, as was quite unexampled in the history of it. Fortunate, indeed, are you, who can turn to consider it as a scene that has passed away, as a danger that society has escaped. No idea whatever can be conveyed to you; none, not the faintest, of what was experienced by those who lived at the time, who every day read and heard of such scenes as I have alluded to, and yet saw, at the same time, the French armies every where bearing down all opposition; and these presumptuous renovators of the world, these tyrannical propagators of liberty, partly by their popular doctrines, and partly by their armies, revolutionizing every country they

approached, and preparing by the sword a reception for those new opinions, which, as Mr. Burke truly admonished mankind, left no protection for the rights of established property, gave no countenance to those ordinary virtues, and offered no acknowledgment of those principles of human conduct and belief, which had been hitherto thought, and justly thought, indispensable to the security and happiness of mankind.

And now I must observe a little upon the character and talents of these Jacobin leaders, or rather, I must direct your attention to this point through the whole of the remainder of this lecture. A strange misapprehension seems to me to exist, that these were not men of any extraordinary powers of mind; that Robespierre, for instance, had neither eloquence nor capacity; was a mere wretched being, made up only of selfishness, cruelty, and cunning, as despicable as he was detestable. But this is not so: these were qualities to be found in him, it must be admitted, but he added others, not indeed of a moral, but of an intellectual nature; and not to understand the ability of these dreadful men, of Robespierre and his friends, is not to understand this system of terror, or the edification which it may afford to a reflecting mind. And, therefore, to finish the sketch which I have attempted of this Reign of Terror, and still further to excite your curiosity with regard to these extraordinary times, and to show you to what extent and in what manner the new opinions were carried, and were defended, I will advert to a few passages from such speeches and reports as were made by Robespierre and his junta, and which now exist, as public documents, in the annals of the Revolution. Look, for instance, at the reports drawn up by the base and versatile Barrère, the ready orator and penman of every party and every cause: you will see every topic that the subject supplied, seized upon, and turned to the utmost advantage; the difficulties of the case evaded, the objections encountered, all, with the utmost prudence and skill; every where the declamation and the argument carried on with the most flowing plausibility, spirit, and address. His state papers are too long to quote, and will be sometimes thought, it is very possible, too long to read; but they, who read now, must recollect, that it was impossible for a writer, if he did but speak of matters relative to the republic, to appear

tedious to those he was addressing at that particular period, when nothing was, or could be, interesting to them, that did not concern their Revolution, and all their hopes and their fears, as connected with that event. Equally spirited and skilful were the addresses that were drawn up by these men, to be afterwards issued by the Convention. In judging of them, the reader must never for a moment forget the nature of the people to whom they were addressed, and the crisis out of which they arose. I will quote a few paragraphs to exemplify a little what I am saying. In August, 1793, as you are aware, the situation of these Jacobins seemed desperate; the constitution they had offered to the French people had, however, been just accepted. On this occasion, "To arms, Frenchmen," cried the Convention, in their address to the nation, "to arms! At the very instant, when a people of friends and brothers are locked in each other's embraces, the despots of Europe come to violate your property, and devastate your frontiers! To arms! start all to arms! rush forward and crowd together, to arms! It is Liberty that now summons to her aid those who have just pledged to her their vows; this is the second time that conspiring tyrants and slaves have defiled by their footstep the land of a sovereign people; half of their sacrilegious armies have, on that land, the first time they appeared, found their graves; let them now, the second time, perish all; and let their bones, whitening in our plains, be raised as trophies in the midst of those fields that their blood shall have fertilized. To arms! Frenchmen, to arms! cover yourselves with a glory the most splendid, while you defend that adored liberty, the first tranquil days of which shall shower down on you, and each succeeding generation of your posterity, every possible description of happiness and prosperity."

Again. You will observe, that the public, within Paris and without, were also managed on every occasion by these Jacobins with the greatest ability, and supplied with such addresses to bring up to the Convention as were wanted. "You have decreed, citizens, representatives," said an answer that was immediately presented to the Convention, "you have decreed a requisition only of the first class of citizens; if you ask but for one hundred thousand soldiers, they

will not be found; make a general call, and millions of men will answer. The people wish for no war of tactics, nor to be at the mercy of generals, traitors, and perfidious men, who have hitherto had them massacred in detail; they wish to terminate this desolating war, by a single effort, that shall at once put at end to our enemies—a single effort of vengeance and destruction. Decree then, on the instant, that the tocsin of liberty shall, on a day appointed, resound through all the communes of the republic. Let them tremble, the cohorts of these despots! a multitude, an innumerable multitude of arms, directed by vengeance and by justice, are raised against them; and they shall see, in their own inevitable death, the impossibility of enslaving a people that is free."

Paragraphs of the above kind, extracted from the public documents, that were interchanged, will give you, for the present, some idea, however faint, of the manner in which the desperate measures, that followed, were introduced; these measures you are already apprized of: the whole population, that could be withdrawn from the land and labour of the community, was seized upon, and converted to different purposes of war; the kingdom considered as in a state of siege; law, property, the constitution, every thing, for a time, suspended or at an end; and the Committees of Public Safety, the revolutionary tribunal, and the system of terror established.

Observe now, in like manner, the speeches and reports drawn up by Robespierre. I will read you a few paragraphs, though nothing can be less fitted to do proper justice to papers of this kind, than exhibiting short extracts from them, but I have no other expedient; and if I give a general impression, and excite your curiosity, my end will be answered. Observe, then, the able manner in which he addressed himself to the French people on those occasions, that were of difficulty and danger to them and to himself. "Citizens, representatives of the people," said Robespierre, in the report he made to the Convention, on the 5th of December, 1793, in the name of the Committee of Public Safety, "the coalesced kings make war upon our republic with their armies, with their intrigues, and with their libels: we will oppose to their armies, armies more brave; to their intrigues, the vigilance

and the terror of the national justice; and to their libels, truth."

After some further preface, he produces the answer he had drawn up, for the Convention, to the different manifestoes of the allied powers. "The National Convention," says the manifesto of Robespierre, "shall it make answer to the manifestoes of the tyrants that are leagued against the French republic? To despise them is the natural course; but it is useful to confound them, it is just to punish them. A manifesto of despotism against liberty! how whimsical a phenomenon! These enemies of France, how have they dared to call in our fellow men, as arbiters between themselves and us? How is it that they have not feared lest the subject of the quarrel should awaken the remembrance of their crimes, and be their destruction? And of what do they accuse us? Of faults that are their own; they accuse us of rebellion! Slaves, as you are, you, who are in revolt against the sovereignty of the people, know you not that there is a blasphemy, that can only be justified by victory? See there the scaffold of the last of our tyrants; see the French nation armed to punish all that are like him; and such then is our answer. The kings accuse the French people of immorality! All people lend an ear, an attentive ear, to the lessons of these respectable preceptors of the human race! The morality of kings! just Heaven! All people celebrate the good faith of Tiberius, the frankness of Louis XVI.; admire the good sense of Claudius, and the wisdom of George; vaunt the temperance and justice of William and of Leopold; exalt the chastity of Messalina, the conjugal fidelity of Catherine, and the modesty of Antoinette; praise the invincible horror of all the despots, past, present, and to come, for usurpation and tyranny; their tender regard for innocence oppressed; their religious respect for the rights of humanity. Why accuse us of irreligion? They proclaim, that we have waged war against the Deity himself: how edifying is the piety of these tyrants! how agreeable must be to Heaven the virtues, which shine with such splendour in their courts, and the benefits which they diffuse over the earth! Of what Deity is it that they speak? Do they know any other than pride, debauchery, and all the vices? They call themselves the images of the Divinity; is it

to make us hate the Divinity? They say that their authority is his work: no, no, God indeed created tigers, but the kings are the chef-d'œuvre of human corruption; if they invoke the heaven, it is to usurp the earth; if they speak of the Divinity, it is to put themselves into his place; it is to him that they refer the prayers of the poor, and the groans of the wretched; but they are themselves the gods of the rich, the oppressors and assassins of the people. . . . . Nations of the earth, if you have not force enough to recover your part in the common heritage, take care, at least, not to violate our rights, or to calumniate our courage. Your tyrants impute to us some irregularities, inseparable from the stormy movements of a great revolution; they impute to us the effects of their own intrigues, and of the crimes of their emissaries. All that the French Revolution has produced of the wise and the sublime, has been the work of the people; every thing of a contrary description has been the work of our enemies. But hear! all the armies of the tyrants of Europe repulsed, spite of five years of treasons, conspiracies, and internal discords; the scaffold of traitor-representatives erected by the side of the last of our tyrants; the immortal tables, where our representatives, in the midst of all our storms, have inscribed the social compact of the French people; all men made equal before the law; all the guilty-great trembling before the image of justice; helpless innocence astonished to find at last an asylum in our tribunals; the love of our country triumphant over all the vices of slaves, over all the perfidy of our enemies; the people full of energy and wisdom, the people terrible and just, rallying at the voice of reason, and learning to distinguish its enemies, even under the mask of patriotism; flying to arms to defend the magnificent work of its courage and its virtue: such is the expiation that we offer to the world for our own mistakes, and for the crimes of our enemies. Illustrious defenders of the cause of kings, princes, ministers, generals, and courtiers, produce for us the instances of your civic virtues; recount to us the important services you have rendered to humanity. No; speak to us of the fortresses you have conquered by your guineas; pride youselves on the talents of your emissaries, and of the readiness with which your soldiers fly before the defenders of the republic; pride yourselves for

your noble disdain of the rights of nations and of humanity; of your exploits at Genoa and Toulon. Tyrants! such are your virtues. Sublime parliament of Great Britain! come, cite your heroes. You have an opposition party, it seems; with you, then, it is patriotism that is in opposition; it is despotism, then, that triumphs: it is the minority that is in opposition; it is the majority, then, that is corrupt. Insolent and vile people! your pretended representation is venal; even under your own eyes, and on your own avowal. You even adopt their favourite maxims, that the talents of your deputies are as much an object of traffic, as are the wool of your sheep, or the steel of your manufactories; and you, you dare to talk to us of morality and of freedom! What strange privilege is this, to babble without measure and without shame, that the stupid patience of their people seems to allow to these tyrants,—these tyrants that make war, not with arms, but with crimes; that dare to accuse the National Convention of corruption, and to insult the virtues of the French people. Generous people! we swear by thyself that thou shalt be revenged. Before thy enemies shall make war upon us, we will exterminate them all. It is the house of Austria shall perish, not France; it is London that shall be made free before Paris shall be made slave. The destinies of the republic, and of the tyrants of the earth, have been weighed in the eternal balance, and the tyrants have been found wanting. French people, let us forget our dissensions, and march against these tyrants! let us trample down and subdue them, you by your arms, and we by our laws. Let these traitors tremble! let the last of these cowardly emissaries of our enemies disappear! let patriotism triumph, and let innocence fear no more! Fight, Frenchmen, fight! your cause is holy, your courage not to be overcome. Your representatives know how to die; but they can do more, they know how to conquer."

Such was the sort of manifesto that Robespierre could, on every occasion, produce against his opponents of every description—the allied sovereigns without, or the rivals of his power within. I say nothing of the propriety of his reasonings, or the reasonableness of his views, but I say that here, and all through his speeches, and public papers, there is the

fire, and the energy, and the subtlety, and the dexterity of a skilful advocate and an accomplished demagogue; of a powerful ruler of the passions of those around him; one who knew well how to select and how to enforce the topics that were fittest for his purpose. I know no better description of popular eloquence than this. He who has to sway a multitude, and to wield a fierce democracy, must have a finer imagination, and a more argumentative mind; must be superior in intellect to those he addresses, but he must be part and parcel of themselves: it is their own notions that he must place before them in new points of view; it is their own reasonings that he must decorate with unexpected splendour, and array in the imagery of his fancy; it is their own ordinary feelings to which he must communicate new life and activity, by exhibiting to them with still deeper energy, and still more impatient enthusiasm. Wisdom, and philosophy, and humanity, the calm distinctions of a reasoning mind, the finer sentiments of a more delicate morality, and a quicker sense of justice and of right, these will avail him little with the populace, or rather will only dress him out, to be their victim, to be driven from their counsels with hootings and with rage, to languish in exile, or perish on their scaffolds.

One great object of Robespierre was to excite the public against the allied sovereigns, who were invading the country. They had published manifestoes; one highly praised by Mr. Burke had appeared from England. It is in answer to these that Robespierre drew up the state papers of December, 1793, from which I have just read to you a few extracts.

The next great object of Robespierre was to reconcile the French people to the system of terror, or to what he called the revolutionary government: another report was therefore made to the Convention shortly after, on the 25th of December, 1793. Observe now his representations. I will read a few paragraphs. Consider whether he shows any want of that plausible subtlety so valuable to these great deceivers of mankind, who have always thought it necessary to make out a sort of case for themselves and their supporters; and now consider that the case to be made out was the system of terror,—its reasonableness, its justice, its superior wisdom.

"The theory of the revolutionary government," says the

report, "is as new as is the Revolution that has produced it. It is in vain to look for it in the books of political writers, who have not foreseen this Revolution, or in the laws of tyrants, who, content to abuse their power, trouble themselves little about its legitimacy; and so the term "revolutionary government" is to the aristocrat but a subject for terror or a text for calumny, to the tyrant but a scandal, and to the generality of mankind but an enigma. This enigma must therefore be explained, that all good citizens at least may be rallied to the defence of the principles of the public weal. The great end and meaning, then, of a constitutional government is to *maintain* and preserve the republic; of a revolutionary, to *found* it. The Revolution is the war of liberty against its enemies; the constitution is the rule of liberty, when now victorious and at peace. The revolutionary government ever stands in need of a more than ordinary activity, precisely because it is in a state of war: it is submitted to rules less uniform and less rigorous, because the circumstances in which it is placed are stormy and changeable; above all, because it is forced at every moment to display resources that are new, and that are rapid, to provide against dangers that are new, and that are pressing. The constitutional government concerns itself chiefly with *civil* liberty; the revolutionary, with the *public* liberty. Under the constitutional régime it is sufficient that individuals are protected against the abuse of public power; under the revolutionary, the public power is itself obliged to make defence against all the factions that assail it: the revolutionary government owes to all good citizens national protection; to the enemies of the people it owes but death." In the last few words you see how rapidly the reasonings converge to the point proposed—the system of terror, the revolutionary tribunal, and the guillotine. "These remarks," continues Robespierre in his reports, "suffice to explain the enigma and the nature of the laws we call revolutionary. Those who call them arbitrary or tyrannic are only stupid or perverse sophisters, who seek to confound things totally in their nature different; who would wish to submit to the same régime, peace and war, health and disease; or rather, who would wish only the resurrection of tyranny, and the death of their country. If they are ever found to call for the literal

observance of constitutional maxims, it is only to violate them with impunity. They are a sort of cowardly assassins, who, to destroy the republic in its cradle, would swaddle it round with vague adages and rules, from which they well know how at pleasure to disengage themselves. If the revolutionary government must be in its march more active, in its movements more free than ordinary government, is it on that account less just and less legitimate? No; it is founded on the most sacred of all laws—the good of the people; upon the most irrefragable of all titles—necessity. It has also its rules, all founded in justice, and a regard to public order. It has nothing in common with anarchy and disorder: its end and aim, on the contrary, is to repress them, that it may introduce hereafter, and strengthen, the reign of the law. It has nothing in common with what is arbitrary, for it is not the passions of individuals that are to direct it, but the public good. The measure of its force is the audacity and perfidy of conspirators; the more terrible to the bad, the more favourable to the good: the more it is driven by circumstances to acts of necessary rigour, the more must it abstain from measures that uselessly interfere with liberty."

Robespierre then goes on to inveigh against what he calls moderatism, which he considers as a device of the enemy, and as fatal to the republic. "Patriotism," he cries, "is from its very nature ardent. Who can love his country coldly? Patriotism more peculiarly falls to the share of men that are artless, and little able to calculate the political *consequences* of any measure that is in its *motive* directed to the public good. And who is the patriot, however enlightened, that is not sometimes mistaken? . . . . . If those are to be considered as criminal, who in a revolutionary movement may have passed the line of prudence, you will involve in one common sentence of proscription, with citizens that are bad, all the natural friends of liberty, your own friends, and all the supporters of the republic. If the revolutionary government is not seconded by the energy, by the enlightened minds, by the patriotism, by the kindness, and by the indulgence of all the representatives of the people, how can it acquire a force of reaction proportioned to the efforts of Europe, that is attacking it, and

of all the enemies of liberty, who are pressing upon it from every quarter?"

These enemies Robespierre then proceeds to describe as innumerable, consisting of emissaries from foreign governments, spies, traitors, and pretended patriots; that the allied powers had in fact established in France a secret government, that was a perfect rival to the regular and avowed government; that money was every where circulated; and, in short, that there was employment enough for the revolutionary government, if they wished to save France and its liberties from the dangers by which they were surrounded.

The main points evidently are those which you see here adverted to; and were you to read the speech, as I have done, you would, I think, agree with me in attributing to it the qualities I have mentioned, and in considering it as well fitted (the great merit of all public addresses) to accomplish all the purposes intended. The extracts that I have given, short and limited in number as they must necessarily be, will perhaps be sufficient for my purpose, and serve to show you the abilty and revolutionary energy, the haughty tone of decisive defiance with which Robespierre and the Jacobin party defended themselves against all their enemies, and established their own entire despotism; the subtlety, the ingenuity, the eloquence, the fire, and the genius of their dreadful minds. The more you look into the public reports and speeches, and the more you consider the different passages in the political life and history of these men, the more you will be compelled to acknowledge, what you will find the historians in general, from their detestation of such monsters of cruelty, not disposed to admit, their great ability. The fact is, however, clear. Consider the theatric nature of the French nation; consider the nature of that part of it, more particularly the lower orders of the metropolis, with which they had to do; and you will never see any want of that plausible declamation and exciting eloquence which were fitted for their purpose Observe this when they had to destroy the king—the first point; when they had to destroy their rivals, the Girondists—the second; when they had to raise the country against the allied powers, to rail against the English, against Toulon and

Lyons, against the Royalists and Counter-Revolutionists of La Vendée; in short, to make their enemies odious—the third point; when they had to reconcile the people of France to their own desperate measures of every kind—the fourth point; when they had to destroy the Hebertists,—Hebert, Anacharsis Clootz, and those of the lowest school of the Jacobins—the Atheists, and Anarchists, who for a time seemed to eclipse them in the favour of the populace; when, again, they had to destroy Danton and his friends.

One really should, at first, be at a total loss to conceive how pretences could be found to bring Danton to the scaffold; yet on every occasion the necessary eloquence and ability were shown, proper terms of reproach invented, proper popular cries set up; due advantage taken of the suspicious nature of the French people, of their characteristic versatility, impetuosity, and folly. To strike at the Royalists and the aristocrats, they set up the cry of "liberty and equality;" against the Girondists, of "no federalism;" "the republic one and indivisible." After their fall, terror was made the order of the day, recommended under phrases of "public safety," "necessity," "cause of the Revolution," &c.

After the fall of Hebert and the Atheists, justice and probity were the order of the day. After the fall of the Dantonists, all the moral virtues were made to shine forth in the speeches and reports of Robespierre and his junta, for Danton and his friends, it seems (who were men of pleasure, and wanted the revolutionary horrors to cease, that they might have leisure to enjoy themselves), were to be stigmatized as men too much disposed to favour the enemies of the state, and in their private conduct too treacherous; and phrases were therefore coined, and they were called "the indulgents and the immorals." Thus whatever was the difficulty to be overcome, or the enemy to be overpowered, the proper means were adopted; and these enemies were so various, from the Royalists down to the Anarchists, from the Roman Catholic priest down to the Atheist, and these difficulties so insuperable, from the overthrowing of the monarchy on the 10th of August, to the establishment of the maximum of the guillotine, that any praise that can be allowed to men of guilt and blood, for courage, decision, and intellectual ability; to rulers of mobs, pirates, or captains of

banditti, must be in large measure conceded to Robespierre and the Jacobins; and their reports, their speeches, their public compositions of every kind, bear ample evidence, I conceive, to justify the representations I am now making. Among such lessons as I have already intimated to you may be drawn from these memorable documents, you will not forget more particularly the edification that is to be derived from seeing the manner in which the worse may be made to appear the better reason; the danger in which well-meaning men are placed, when they are addressed by those who are not only bad men, but able men; the facility with which, as I have often apprized you, the orators and writers of a party can make out their case, when they take for granted all the principles and facts that are necessary for its support.

I must now advert to a very remarkable portion of the history of Robespierre and the Jacobins, and of the Revolution itself.

In a former lecture I alluded to the fact that you must have heard of so often—the public abolition of Christianity, and indeed of all religion whatever; a fact so extraordinary that I thought it somewhat necessary to produce extracts from the Moniteur to verify it. In that official gazette the fact, however, appears, and the proceedings that took place, such as they were afterwards very fully exhibited in all the accounts of the historians. To this excess were the new opinions at last carried; beyond it they could not go. Something, however, yet remained. The existence of our *rational* nature is a matter of constant experience, and *this* at least could not well be denied, and therefore the principle of reason was deified; every other species of religion was abjured. Here then the new opinions subsided, but only because there was no principle of belief left, which could possibly admit of a dispute.

It can excite no surprise that such an event as this made a very strong impression upon the nations of Europe at the time; and this impression has been transmitted to us, and the French nation has been considered in a general manner as having been a nation of atheists from this time to the usurpation of Buonaparte. It has not, I think, been sufficiently noticed that, after all, this was not the case; that there was a sort of recoil from the frightful extreme to which the new

opinions had been urged; and that, though the reign of atheism existed for half a year, it existed no longer. It was Hebert and his followers who procured the public establishment of these atheistical opinions; and when this party was put down by Robespierre, their system followed, and was put down also. Immediately on their fall, this demagogue made their opinions a part of their accusation, and set about restoring the belief of the existence of the Deity, and of the immortality of the soul. It does not at all follow, that these were not always his opinions, though in the course of his revolutionary life he became a monster of cruelty. But be this as it may, at least it may be concluded, that these opinions retained or recovered their hold on the community around him; or he never would have exerted himself, as he did, to procure their re-establishment. A demagogue like this, who meant to rule, could not have run counter to the public sentiment.

Now, I confess, it appears to me, that as it is a memorable fact in the history of civilized man, that the progress of the new opinions should go so far, as at last publicly to throw off all belief of a Creator and a future life, so is it also a memorable fact, that such an apostasy, from all the common principles and feelings of mankind, could not long subsist; and that it was thought necessary, by the great demagogue of the hour, to restore the national creed, if not to Christianity, to the great doctrines, at least, of natural religion.

You will observe, then, that a report was made by Robespierre to the Convention, on the 7th of May, 1794; and this was intended by him to be introductory to his decree for the acknowledgment of the existence of the Supreme Being, and the immortality of the soul. It was full of the most extraordinary matter; but in the midst of much declamation and invective against governments, traitors to the Revolution, priests and priestcraft, appear the following paragraphs. He is speaking of Hebert and his followers, of the atheistical school, the party he had just put down.

"These pretended patriots," he says, "have erected their immorality, not only into a sort of system, but a sort of religion; they have endeavoured to destroy all the generous sentiments of nature, by their example as by their precepts; they

have searched into the human mind and the human heart; they have endeavoured to find every thing that could be a support to morals, but only to tear it away, only to stifle the principle of conscience, the invisible accuser, that nature has there concealed. But do you, do you consult but the welfare of your country, and the interests of humanity. Every institution, every doctrine, which consoles and elevates the soul, should be welcomed. Reject all those which tend but to degrade and corrupt it. Reanimate and exalt all those generous sentiments, and those grand moral ideas, which they have attempted to extinguish. Who then has commissioned thee to announce to the people that the Divinity does not exist, thou, thou who canst feel such a passion for this arid doctrine, yet canst feel none for thy country? And what benefit to thee, to persuade mankind that a blind force presides over their destinies, and strikes at random crime and virtue; that the soul is but a passing breath, that exists not beyond the portals of the tomb? The notion of his annihilation, will it inspire a man with sentiments more pure, and more elevated than the belief of his immortality? Will it inspire him with more respect for his fellow men and for himself; with more devotedness to his country, more boldness to brave tyranny, or a better contempt for pleasure and for death? You, who regret the virtuous friend that you have lost; you, who love to think that the nobler part of him has escaped from destruction; you, who shed your tears over the bier of your son, or the lost partner of your heart, are you consoled by him who tells you that there remains of them nothing but a vile heap of dust? Wretched man that thou art, thou, who art expiring under the stroke of the assassin, thy last sigh is an appeal to eternal justice! Innocence even on the scaffold can make the tyrant turn pale, though seated on his car of victory and triumph; and where would be this ascendant, if indeed the tomb could render equal the oppressor and the oppressed? Miserable sophister that thou art! by what right dost thou come to wrest from innocence the sceptre of reason, and place it in the hands of guilt; throw a funeral pall over nature; make vice look up with joy, and virtue droop in sorrow? Why is humanity to be degraded? The more a man is endowed with sensibility and genius, the more is he attached to those ideas

that ennoble his nature and elevate his heart; and the doctrines of such men become the doctrines of the universe. And how is it to be supposed that such ideas are not truths? I cannot conceive, at least, how nature can have suggested to man fictions more useful than all her realities: and if the existence of the Deity and the immortality of the soul be indeed but dreams, they are, of all the conceptions of the human mind, the most beautiful. The great point for the morals of society would be to create a rapid instinct, that, without the tardy succour of reason, should lead men to seek good, and avoid evil; but the reason of each man is drawn aside by his passions, or is often little better than a sophist, that pleads their cause; and the authority of man over himself may always be assailed by his self-love. Now what produces, or replaces this precious instinct, what supplies this insufficiency of human authority, is, the religious sentiment which impresses upon the mind the idea of a sanction given to the precepts of morality, by a power superior to man; and I know not that any legislator has ever thought of turning his nation to atheism. I know, indeed, that sages have mingled fictions with truth to strike the imagination of the people, or attach them to their institutions. Lycurgus and Solon have had their oracles, and Socrates his familiar genius. But you will not conclude from this, that you must deceive men to instruct them, but only that you are fortunate to live in an age and in a country, when the progress of knowledge leaves you no other task to fulfil, but to recall man to nature and to truth. You will be careful, then, how you break the link that unites men to the Author of their being. It is even sufficient, that this opinion has obtained among a people, to make it dangerous to destroy it; for the motives of every duty, and the foundations of morality being connected with this idea, to destroy it, is to demoralize the people. On the whole, he who could form a substitute for the Divinity in the system of social life, would be a prodigy of genius; he, who without having any thing to substitute, thinks only of banishing the Divinity from the human mind, appears to me but a prodigy of stupidity or perverseness. If the principles, which I have thus developed, are mistaken, I deceive myself at least with all, whom the world has yet revered. Cicero in the senate,

Socrates when dying, Leonidas at Thermopylæ, the man truly great, the real hero, esteems himself too well, not to turn away from the idea of his own annihilation. The wretch who is despicable in his own eyes, who is horrible in the eyes of others, is aware that nature has for him no better present to bestow."

Such are the sentiments expressed by Robespierre. This report, as I have mentioned, embraced a variety of strange topics; "but all of it," says the editor, "that appeared to do homage to nature, and the virtues she inspires, received, at every turn, marks the most decided of general applause; and it was amidst such acclamations, that the decrees that followed were proclaimed: 'That the French people acknowledge the existence of the Supreme Being, and the immortality of the soul; that a fête should be celebrated in honour of the Supreme Being.'"

Now I do not say that a fête of this kind from the people of Paris and the Convention, at this period, and Robespierre to be the high priest and orator, is an idea that can be at all congenial to our minds (it will be an offence to many), and such a festival would have better become, it may well be thought, a band of Swiss patriots, after the overthrow of one of their Austrian invaders, assembled in the simple innocence of their lives, and the unaffected piety of their hearts, humbly to acknowledge their gratitude to their Almighty protector. This is most true; but we must take men as we find them. Men or things, it is always our first philosophy to make the best of them; and on this occasion the nature of the French people, of this demagogue, of the existing circumstances of the Revolution, must be considered. We have just seen, with horror, the deification of reason, and the abolition of all religion, infamous processions, and the great national church profaned; we now, therefore, may be well pleased to see a recoil, which, however imperfect, is at least a disavowal, and departure from such impieties. A sort of reparation is here made to mankind; and there is, at least, an approach to a better order of things. Surely there is here a most extraordinary testimony, paid even by such men, at such a period, to truths so important to mankind. Certainly, these truths must be deeply implanted in the human heart, if they could

not be torn away by all the scenes of the Revolution, by all the overthrow of established opinions, and by all the efforts of the legislature of the country, publicly rejecting and abjuring them. Certainly they must have been intended by the Almighty Creator to form part of our belief; they must have come to us stamped with his authority; as such, they must be received. Whatever other evidences of belief, whatever other motives of duty we may have, certainly we have a right to avail ourselves of all such conclusions, as may be fairly deduced from so remarkable a provision in the economy of our intellectual nature.

I have adverted to this particular portion of the Reign of Terror, because, I confess, I have been struck with it myself, and think it both interesting and important. I may be allowed, I hope, even from the murky recesses of the mind of Robespierre, even from the public documents of this dreadful people (for such they had, at this time, been rendered by their guilty leaders), even from the midst of these scenes of bloodshed, licentiousness, and injustice, from which good and pious men at the time turned, with averted eyes and trembling hearts; even from this, the worst period of the Revolution, I may be allowed, I hope, to draw one unexpected testimony to those great and eternal truths on which the best interests and happiness of mankind, here and hereafter, so essentially depend. I may be allowed, I hope, at whatever humble distance, to look up to the example of the most eminent reasoners and defenders of our religion, none of whom would have supposed themselves otherwise than well employed, while they were endeavouring to show how strong were the feelings and principles with which the Creator had, from the first, in his mercy and goodness, bound his creatures to himself, and how distinct was the preparation, which he had thus made for the subsequent reception of the more perfect consolations, and promises, and instruction of revelation.

LECTURE XLIII.

REIGN OF TERROR.

IT may be doubted, whether the policy of Robespierre was good in breaking with Danton and his friends, and sending them to the guillotine. I speak not of any higher considerations, but as a question of policy, it may be doubted whether the decision of Robespierre was right, with a view merely to the continuance and enjoyment of his own power. Danton required only a sacrifice, which it would have been well for Robespierre if he had made. A relaxation of his system of terror, and on the whole, a sincere sympathy and union with these old revolutionists, would have reconciled them and the people of France to the rule of the triumvirate; while Danton, like a great barbarian conqueror, whose triumphs had been accomplished, would have been every day more and more within the influence of the common pleasures of life, and less and less disposed to interfere with his old associate in the management of public affairs. But "vaulting ambition that o'erleaps itself, and falls on the other side." And such was it now, in the instance of Robespierre. After the event, no doubt, it is easy to reason; but what, it may be asked, what happened on this occasion, that Robespierre might not have expected? Were not the friends of Danton many, and men of great energy and experience? Were they likely ever to forgive their leader's persecution and death? Would it not be necessary to extend still wider the system of terror and public executions? Would it not soon become a question, whether any man was safe? Would not resistance be at last made by every one, in and out of the Convention, as the best chance of life? What but ruin could be the result, sooner or later, of this every day more and more impracticable system of ruling by the guillotine? But Robespierre had been

so little accustomed to a moderate and generous policy, that no such considerations as these might possibly have occurred to him. The persecution, however, of Danton, was the great mistake of his political life, in the way we are now considering it; it was the great exciting cause of his own destruction. The mistake he was making was seen clearly by Danton himself. "I drag Robespierre after me," said he.

And now that we have been so long occupied with this most extraordinary subject, the Reign of Terror, as a conclusion of the whole, it may not perhaps be amiss to cast a parting glance at the life, character, and fate of this dreadful Robespierre, the great author and support of it.

I have already mentioned to you the papers of Robespierre. Among these papers may be seen a short account of him by Freron; and it may be amusing, in the first place, to trace in his earlier years the future Moloch of the French nation. He was brought up at the college of Louis Le Grand. Camille Desmoulins was his fellow student, as was Freron himself. "He was then," says Freron, "what we have since seen him, melancholy, bilious, morose, and jealous of the success of his comrades; he mixed not in their sports, he walked alone, always musing, and with the appearance of a person not in health. He had none of the qualities of youth, already had his flexible countenance contracted those convulsive grimaces which we have observed in him: never communicative, no frankness, no overflowing, no abandonment of the heart, exclusive selfishness, a stiffness in opinion totally insurmountable, no sincerity whatever: one never remembers to have seen him laugh. He guarded deeply the remembrance of any injury; was vindictive and treacherous; and even at that period knew how to dissemble his resentment. He succeeded in his studies, and bore away prizes; he owed them to great application. He embraced the profession of the law, which he practised at Arras, the place of his birth, but his ambition was to be a man of letters. Nothing more was heard of him until the Revolution. In the Constituent Assembly he was only remarkable for his extreme difficulty in speaking, though he often endeavoured to speak; he was always hooted down, and thus reduced to silence; diffusion of words, and incoherence of ideas, characterized his eloquence at that period. He

was always the most perfect poltroon on occasions of danger: he did not appear on the 10th of August; was quite terrified on the day of the massacre of the Champ de Mars. From his first arrival at Paris, to that day, he had been lodged, entertained, and accommodated at the house of Humbert, but no recompense did he ever think of returning him, not the slightest service; and during the last six months of his life, he shut his doors against him; the presence of a benefactor was annoying to him. Robespierre was quite choked with bile; his eyes and his yellow complexion showed this. Wine and liquors, which he was used to drink immoderately, must have made him commit some indiscretion, for latterly he drank but water. When he walked out he was always armed with pistols; a sort of garde du corps of his friends accompanied him; they were distributed at intervals, in the streets he passed through, to give him immediate succour, if attacked. Towards the end of his career he practised with pistols every day in his garden, and had become very dexterous. The pleasantries of Camille Desmoulins made him laugh to tears, but it was a laughter immoderate and convulsive, and he immediately after sunk into his former melancholy. When Charles Lameth was wounded in a duel, Robespierre made it a sort of religious duty to visit him twice a day; he called him his friend, as he did Barnave; but he guillotined the one, and would not have spared the other. He had squeezed the hand of Camille Desmoulins the very day that he signed his arrest."

Such is the description of Robespierre by one, who must have known him from his earliest youth. It may not be as easy as might be expected, to judge of the character of Robespierre, if we refer ourselves merely to the French writers and historians. He subdued the country for nearly two years together; and there was nothing grand or imposing in his character, sufficiently to gratify the national vanity. He had not splendid talents, and overpowering eloquence, like Mirabeau; he was not a great military conqueror, like Buonaparte; there was nothing in his character to admire, nothing to dazzle or astonish. He was not even a fierce and daring tribune of the people, like Danton. It was as disgraceful to the French nation, as calamitous, to have fallen before a

tyrant, so mean and unworthy of command. The result is, that even the qualities that belonged to him are not admitted; and the problem of his success in the Revolution would be left totally inexplicable, if such pictures, as are drawn of him, were supposed exact. Those, however, who do not partake of the national mortification, and who only share with the French writers and historians the detestation of his cruelty, will find no difficulty in comprehending his progress, his elevation, or his fall. A few words will, I apprehend, explain these phenomena. He was originally what Freron, his youthful companion, represents; he was a lawyer, and had talents sufficient to attract notice, and send him, as deputy, to the Constituent Assembly. Here his natural spleen, ill humour, and malignant disposition, threw him into opposition, and made him naturally adopt every measure the most violent, as it successively arose. His bad qualities had ample nourishment during the unhappy struggle between the crown and the popular assemblies; and his views must have opened, as the different leaders of the Revolution disappeared from the stage. Men, that engage in public life, are not indisposed to the pleasures of power and consequence; and at last his ambition kindled with his opportunities, and with the success which he gradually obtained. He had not the personal courage of a revolutionist, but this kept him from hazarding his life, and enabled him to outlive the storm. He was always, therefore, ready to profit by the result, and to take the direction favourable to his interests. The whole secret of his elevation seems to have turned upon a few points. He was austere and stoical, and he was, therefore, content to be poor; a virtue always intelligible to the populace. The populace were at the head of affairs; and by being thus recommended to them, he was gradually introduced into the possession of power. He was envious and cynical; and he, therefore, observed, and treasured up in his memory, the faults and mistakes of others: he had it thus always in his power to damage or ruin, as occasion might require, all other candidates for the popular favour. Lastly, he had a power of thinking and of speaking, which, whatever may be said in disparagement of it, often amounted to real eloquence, and was always admirably adapted to influence, as he wished, those

whom he addressed. Finally, he had no feelings or affections, ever to stand in the way of his ambition; and ambition seems to have been, at last, the only passion of which his heart was susceptible. He was, therefore, without pity, and without remorse; and the system of terror was an instrument that he used without scruple, as he would any other, by which he could best subdue the opponents and rivals of his power. It is a mortifying passage in the history of mankind, that a being like this should obtain domination, and such a domination, over one of the first kingdoms in Europe; yet such is the fact: and the few considerations I have mentioned, sufficiently, as I conceive, explain it. From the first to the last we follow him in every step of his career, with unmingled sensations of dislike or detestation: we give him no credit for his love of liberty; we know not how to suppose it genuine, for he is selfish, mean, and base. Is there a harsh or cruel measure proposed, he is sure to favour or defend it; is any risk or danger to be incurred, he leaves the hazard to others, and waits to benefit by the event. He hides himself on the 10th of August, when the Tuileries is to be stormed. The unhappy king, on the contrary, is brought to trial, stands helpless before him, and he is the most relentless persecutor of his life and honour. On every occasion, his is a malignity that nothing can soften, a resentment that nothing can appease, a vengeance that only stops at death. It is astonishing how such a man could either have friends or followers; still he had both. In his papers, letters appear addressed to him, as they would have been to the most amiable and excellent of men, and no political ruler ever had such incense offered up to him before. You will see instances in the preface, by Courtois, drawn from his papers: "his precious life;" "his rare talents;" "the insignificance of the Convention, or the republic, compared to the value of his existence and welfare;" "the pure and incorruptible Robespierre;" "the virtuous Robespierre;" these are the expressions to be found there: "that he united the energy of an ancient Spartan and Roman with the eloquence of an Athenian." His sanctity, his humanity, his benevolence, are talked of. Such are the flatteries addressed to him, and not unfrequently they became perfectly impious. Robespierre had risen into great import-

ance immediately upon the meeting of the Convention. He had distinguished himself by his ability and virulence in the debates, relative to the trial and fate of the king. He got possession of the Jacobins; and when Marat was assassinated, the Girondists overthrown, and Danton had become careless and indolent, all eyes were fixed upon Robespierre. He contrived to attach to himself St. Just, and, above all, Barrère; and leaving others to propose and carry bold and desperate measures, while he kept at a safe distance himself, always, however, taking care to come forward and assume the credit of them, when they succeeded; he was, in truth, the real ruler of this great kingdom, during all the Reign of Terror, for nearly two years. His address, however, as a manager of the minds of others, his ability as a speaker, were conspicuous on every occasion, through the whole of his career, until success blunted his sagacity, and betrayed his judgment. To his very able state papers I have already referred. Observe, too, even when he had become intoxicated with power, the advantage he made of such incidents as occurred; the plausible manner in which he endeavoured to persuade the French people, and apparently did persuade most of the violent party, in and out of the Convention (more especially all the Jacobins), that the cause of the Revolution was identified with the continuance of his power. This was particularly shown when attempts had been made on that account, as he said, to assassinate him. You will see a strong specimen of his address and eloquence in the speech he then made in the Convention. I had made extracts from it, but must omit them for want of time.

Having thus given you a short account of the rise, progress, and success of this powerful demagogue, I must next endeavour to describe to you the leading particulars of his decline and fall.

The first stage of this latter history was, the fête that he instituted to the Supreme Being; for, on this occasion, disclosing too plainly his internal pride and ambition, he revolted the minds of those who observed him, both among his adherents and the public.

The second stage was, his measure of the 22nd Prairial, the decree that he proposed to the Convention, which opened

such a door to suspicion and accusation, that the members of the Convention themselves, saw they were no longer safe; that they might, at any moment, be imprisoned and put to death; and that they or their tyrant must fall.

I will allude to each of these in their order.

The day, the 7th Prairial, when he pronounced his discourse on the subject of the assassination, which he had escaped, was considered as a day of the greatest personal triumph to him; but still more the 20th, the day of the fête, when he participated, it is said, in some sort the homage rendered to the Divinity. He was called to the chair on the 16th, was therefore president on the 20th; and marching at the head of the national representation, and affecting to leave between himself and his colleagues a distinct interval, with head raised high, and lofty look, he displayed himself in all the blaze of his glory, the organ of all France, and lifting up his voice, as such, to the Creator of all things. He was not only the author of the famous fête to the Supreme Being, but he officiated on that occasion, as the great high priest: like the heroes of antiquity, however, on their triumphal cars, in the midst of the honours that surrounded him, he could not avoid the shafts of censure and of ridicule. The republican jealousy measured with affright, the height to which he had been raised; envy and hatred smiled at his intoxication, and vowed in secret his destruction; and from this moment might be observed to gather round him the tempest that overthrew him. Such is the account of the editor of the Reports. Some light is thrown on this subject by the Memoirs of Vilate. The morning of the fête he met Robespierre. "Joy," he says, "for the first time brightened over his whole figure. I found that he had not breakfasted, and I asked him to my lodgings; he seemed astonished at the immense concourse that covered the garden of the Tuileries. Hope and gaiety were radiant from every countenance. The women added to the scene by dresses the most elegant. One felt, that one celebrated a fête to the Author of nature. Robespierre ate little; his looks were continually directed to the magnificent spectacle before him: one saw him plunged into the intoxication of enthusiasm. "See," he cried, "the most interesting portion of humanity; the universe is here assembled. O

Nature! thy power how sublime, and how delicious! how should the tyrants turn pale at the very thought of a fête like this!"

Such was all the conversation that passed. It afterwards appeared, that Robespierre had been sought every where, while he lingered at Vilate's lodgings until half past twelve, and that he indulged the paltry and dangerous vanity of keeping the Convention and the people waiting. The fête, such as it was, ridiculous in itself, and revolting to the religious feelings of any regular mind, you will see described in the historians, and it makes a great figure in the Moniteur of the day: it appeared to raise Robespierre to the highest elevation. He was, on that day, "the observed of all observers," but the day was fatal to him. His evident hauteur and self-importance had given universal offence. Some sarcasms had reached even his own ear, and he had remarked among his colleagues, a sort of boldness and self-confidence, that were not usual with them. The next day he repaired to the Committee of Public Safety, and expressed his resentment. Billaud Varennes and Collot d'Herbois (important personages), were not more in humour with the performance of the preceding day than the rest, and when he required the sacrifice of those who had offended him, showed themselves little disposed to the exercise of this sort of vengeance. They entered into no defence of the offenders, but made various unpleasant observations on the fête itself; "that it looked like a renovation of the old superstitions, and was calculated to make the Revolution retrograde." Robespierre was highly irritated; said, that to make the Revolution retrograde, was the furthest from his thoughts; on the contrary, that he was going to introduce a law that would make the revolutionary tribunal more than ever effective. This law was the famous ordinance of the 22nd Prairial, and was, as I have announced to you, the second and more immediate cause of his downfall. Nothing could be more arbitrary and unskilful, than the behaviour of Robespierre on this occasion; he consulted not with the committees. The terms of the law (the law of suspected persons) were of the most general nature. If proofs, either *matérielles* or *morales*, as they were called, could be found, that is, either real, or such

as might be fairly supposed to be real, no further testimonies were necessary. The committees could drag any one to trial, and had then the power of life and death.

And now you are to observe one point, the most important of all. There was no exception made for the members, even of the Convention. In short, Robespierre seems quite to have lost his head amid the intoxication of the fête, and to have supposed he could place every thing at his own disposal, without the slightest attention paid to his old associates and friends; outraging, and defying, and menacing every one of them, and depending only on St. Just and Couthon, and the members of the Jacobin club. Vilate relates, that Barrère burst into a fit of agony, as they were sitting together. "This Robespierre," he said, "is insatiable; because one cannot do every thing he wishes, he is to break with one. If he talks to one of Thuriot, Geoffrey, Rovere, La Courtre, Panis, Cambon, Monestier, and all that Dantonist gang, we might understand him; even Tallien, Bourdon de l'Oise, Legendre, Freron, all very well; but Duval, but Andonen, but Leonard, Bourdon, Vadier, Voulant—it is impossible to give one's consent."

It was clear to Vilate, as he thought, that the Convention was to be decimated, and no one safe. When the law was brought into the Assembly, one of the deputies proposed the printing and the adjournment, saying, "that if the law was adopted without adjournment, nothing more remained, but for each member to blow out his brains at once." The motion was seconded. Robespierre had to come forward to overpower this unexpected resistance; to defend his measure; to declaim about conspirators, about his own services; even to say, that he had always defended the Convention; to insist that the Convention had nothing to fear in him (a perilous nerve to touch), and to declare, that he might fall a sacrifice, but would not be prevented from saving his country. Finally, to propose to sit until midnight, that the law might be discussed, article by article, but at all events passed during the sitting. Such was now the domination of Robespierre, that the law was read and soon after passed.

The die was now cast; the tyrant had identified his power with the success of this new revolutionary project. Bourdon, Tallien, and others, saw plainly, that they might, under the

operation of it, be dragged out, any hour in the night, to nearly immediate execution. Bourdon, therefore, the next day observed, that the Convention could not mean by the law to give the committees power over the members of the Convention, unless they first obtained from the Assembly a decree against them. No, no, was the answer from all quarters of the Assembly." "Liberty, I perceive," said Bourdon, "is imperishable." A profound sensation was created by this remark, and a motion, to the effect he had proposed, was carried. Robespierre was, therefore, for the present checked. But the next day a sharp conversation ensued, between Couthon and Bourdon, and other members, followed by an altercation between Bourdon and Robespierre, and again, between Tallien and the tyrant; and the result was, a regular repeal of what had been done the day before, and the establishment of the frightful law of the 22nd, just as it had been originally proposed by Robespierre. The Convention were, therefore, now checked in their turn. What hope then now for those who had opposed the tyrant? More than sixty of the members of the Convention no longer durst sleep at home. Any hope that now remained, arose chiefly from the circumstance, that the two committees were against him; that the triumvirate (Robespierre, St. Just, and Couthon) were not a little separated from the rest; that the danger threatened too many of the deputies; that a sense of common interest had arisen; that it was a question almost with every man of life and death. It was no wisdom in Robespierre to reduce matters to an issue like this; and it was very different from the cautious policy, and plausible manœuvres, by which his elevation had been acquired. But success betrays the understanding.

A circumstance now occurred that was unfavourable to him. He had become acquainted with a visionary of the name of Catherine Theot; had lent himself too much to her wild fancies. A report was made on the subject to the Convention, and the opportunity was taken to ridicule him; even to send (contrary to his wishes) all the people concerned, to the revolutionary tribunal. Robespierre seems now pettishly and very unwisely, about the middle of June, to have absented himself from the committee and the Convention. What could be the result of this, but to leave the opposition time to

organize and gain strength? He depended on the commune and the Jacobins; and with the latter he was always triumphant: he was always with them the first and greatest citizen of the republic. In the mean time, the operation of his famous law of the 22nd, the law of suspected persons, was tremendous. This was the period at which the system of terror was carried to its greatest excess, an excess that seemed literally to partake of the nature of frenzy; the executions were fifty and sixty every day. "The heads fall like slates," said Fouquier, the public accuser; "but we must do still better the next decade, we must have four hundred and fifty at least." From the month of March, 1793, when the revolutionary tribunal was first instituted, to the 10th of June, 1794 (the famous 22nd Prairial), there had been condemned five hundred and seventy-seven persons; but from this 10th of June (the passing of the law) to the 17th of July, the 9th Thermidor (the fall of Robespierre), twelve hundred and eighty-five, in about one month; a number almost incredible. The public pity at last began to show itself. In the rue St. Honoré, through which the carts passed, the shops were now shut up. The guillotine was then transferred to the Barrière du Trone. In vain; symptoms of compassion appeared even here, in the quarter of the artisans, as in the best habited streets of Paris. It seemed as if the people, though in a moment of transport they could be totally without pity, for then they were perpetrating massacres themselves, could no longer be so, when they saw fifty or sixty helpless beings, against whom they had no resentment, hurried every day to the scaffold, and executed before their eyes and by others, not by themselves. These executions too had begun to descend from the higher ranks of society to the lowest; tailors, hair-dressers, labourers, workmen, were now among the victims. Dumas, the president of the tribunal, was not at ease. Fouquier, the public accuser, durst not stir out at night; he was terrified at the slightest noise; in every person he met, he perceived, he thought, the relative of some one or other whom he had sent to execution, ready to rush upon and assassinate him. Robespierre, in like manner, never appeared in public without a sort of body-guard in attendance upon him, men with bludgeons walking by his side, and placed at proper distances in the streets, through which he had to walk.

But here, it may be asked, what is power and consequence thus acquired? (and it is ever thus in the history of mankind.) "All composure of mind," says Hume, speaking of Cromwell, "was now for ever fled from the protector. He felt that the grandeur, which he had obtained with so much guilt and courage, could not ensure him that tranquillity which it belongs to virtue alone and moderation fully to ascertain." And the historian then goes on to describe (the whole paragraph is very beautiful) the life of misery and suspicion that he led.

Among the papers of Robespierre were found some anonymous letters, to two of which I must make allusion. "Robespierre (the first begins), Robespierre! ah Robespierre! I comprehend it: thou meanest to be dictator, and to destroy the liberty that thou hast created; thou supposest thyself a great man, and already triumphant; but canst thou anticipate, canst thou escape the stroke of this arm of mine, and that of twenty-two others, each resolved, like myself, to act the part of a Brutus and a Scævola? Yes, we are determined to deprive thee of thy life, and to rid France of the serpent that would tear her to pieces, would throw her into irons, and would cause to perish the greatest part of thy brethren by misery and hunger. Tyrant! we know thy projects; we know thy arrangements; but tremble! tremble all of you, you new Decemvirs! The avengers of your country are ready to shed your blood. Surround thyself with thy guards, thy satellites, thy "noirs," and thy slaves; I shall be in the midst of them, doubt it not. Thirty times already have I been ready to thrust into thy throat my poisoned dagger; but I propose, like another Brutus, to partake this glory with others, whom I see weeping over the fate of those hapless victims of thy rage. Tell me, was ever tyrant in history a tyrant greater than thou? And thou not perish! and we not deliver our country from such a monster! We will die, die all of us, if die we must; but thou at least shalt not escape."

Such was the strain of one of these letters. The other is the letter that has been quoted, and has naturally attracted the attention of the historians. "Thou livest still, tiger! gorged with the best blood of France. Hangsman of thy country, thou livest still! but hear, read now thy sentence: I have waited, I wait still, until the famished people sound

the hour of thy punishment; just in their fury, until they drag thee to punishment. If my hope be vain, if it be deferred, hear, read, I tell thee, this hand that now traces out thy sentence, this hand which thy distracted eyes will wander around to discover, this hand which presses thine with horror, shall pierce thy inhuman heart. Every day am I with thee, every day do I see thee, every hour is my lifted hand seeking how to strike thee. O thou! the most wicked of men! live still a few days longer, live to think of me; sleep to dream of me; let the remembrance of me, and thy terror, be the first preparation for thy punishment! Farewell, this very day, while I am looking at thee, I shall enjoy thy terror."

Letters of this kind found among his papers, his bludgeon men continually attending him, the accumulating executions which he thought necessary to his safety, a necessity which, with every execution, was destined still more and more to increase; all these sufficiently show, how dreadful must have been the situation of the mind of the tyrant himself, how little to be envied by the lowest wretch, that was perishing under his guillotine.

The detail of the circumstances attending the fall of Robespierre, it is at first not very easy exactly to comprehend; it is somewhat complicated, but upon a comparison of different accounts it seems to be of the following nature.

Robespierre had in his favour the Jacobins, and in them a turbulent mass, that had always hitherto represented and controlled the public opinion; the commune, also, a local authority, that was connected with the sections of Paris, and had always taken the lead in insurrections. He had also the armed force of Paris, and their commandant, Henriot, with the new mayor, Fleuriot, and the late mayor, Payan; the president too of the revolutionary tribunal, Dumas; the vice-president, Coffinhal; and all the other judges, jurymen, and officers connected with them. This was of itself a very strong force; and to this was added the advantage of having been long an object of terror, and of having always succeeded in every struggle with political rivals and opponents. It should seem, that Robespierre, if the committees and Convention were not obedient to his will, had only to go and make his complaint to the Jacobins, excite in them, which he could

always do, an adequate sensation, communicate it to the commune, make proclamation by the municipal authority, that the people re-entered into their sovereign power, call out the sections, and send Henriot, with his armed force, to demand from the Convention any fifty or sixty deputies that were obnoxious to him. The revolutionary tribunal, the president, the vice-president, the jurymen, the proper officers, and the guillotine, were all in waiting. Where was the difficulty to a man like Robespierre, without principle or remorse? Certainly, these obvious advantages must have pressed very hard on the imaginations of Tallien and his other opponents; what could they expect? But Robespierre was not fit to be the hero of an insurrection, or of a measure like this. He preferred his own mode, by speeches and movements in the Convention and in the Jacobin club, gradually to ruin the credit, and then destroy his enemies by a sort of legislative machinery of his own. In the mean time, it may be asked, where was to be found the strength of those enemies; of Tallien and others? They were to avail themselves of such feelings of humanity and principles of good sense as were reviving among the people; for this had begun to be the case, to say nothing of the better order of citizens, shopkeepers, and others. The lower orders had perceived that the guillotine was fast approaching them; and all must have been aware, that the system of terror was every day becoming more and more intolerable, though the original pretence for its adoption (the danger of the country) had long ceased. Advantage, then, was to be taken of reasonable sentiments like these, and of that sense of common danger, which agitated, more or less, every member of the Convention. In this state of things, to those, whom we shall call conspirators against the tyrant (for patriots is too honourable a term for men only less detestable than Robespierre himself), to the conspirators, then, time was every thing; and Robespierre seems to have made a most unpardonable mistake in retiring from the scene for nearly forty days. Couthon was left alone of all the triumvirs to keep watch (for St. Just was with the armies); and though Couthon was sagacious enough, and very much in the way, Billaud Varennes, Collot d'Herbois, and Barrère, now enemies of Robespierre, possessed themselves,

or rather retained the management of affairs, made some important additions to their party, by gaining over Carnot and others, and above all, contrived to diminish the armed force of Paris, and of the forty-eight companies of cannoniers, belonging to the sections, by sending twenty-four, or at least fifteen, to the armies. All hope of reconciliation was at an end. But it was the policy and intention of the conspirators to wait to be attacked: the field of combat was, in the first place, to be the hall of the Convention. On the 7th of Thermidor, Robespierre (he fell on the 9th) may be considered as having made his first movement by a petition, that was addressed to the Convention by the Jacobin club. "You will make the traitors tremble," it said in conclusion; which was to say, You will expel and execute the opponents of Robespierre. The petition was heard in mournful silence, and no answer returned. The counter movement, on the part of the conspirators, was only a report from Barrère on the state of the nation; a report, which praised the committee for the happy change produced between July 1793 and 1794, and this praise was the only sort of attack that could be ventured against Robespierre, who concerned himself not with the success of the armies, and was hostile to the committee. The report was heard, and the Assembly broke up; the members regarding each other in silence, and not daring to ask any question or make any remark; fearful of any communication, and waiting for some important event on the morrow. And the morrow, the 8th of Thermidor, was, assuredly, a critical day for France; for it was on that day that first were heard during the Reign of Terror sounds of unfavourable remark, of opposition, of resistance to Robespierre. The sitting opened with a long discourse by Robespierre, a sort of manifesto; and the question for some time was, whether it should be printed, or referred to the committees, as best judges of the matter it contained. Fortunately, the tyrant had taken this occasion to find fault with every thing that had been done and every minister employed; and while they started up to defend themselves, and called on Robespierre to prove his accusations, the spell of his authority and of their servility was rudely broken: once broken, it could never be repaired; each deputy, and the Convention

itself, got more and more committed, and the contest became to every one more and more a struggle, from which no retreat was possible. What passed is extremely well given by Thiers: even on the face of the Moniteur the proceedings appear very striking; they are not given until the Moniteur of the 11th, and the storm comes quite unexpectedly on the reader. In the very Moniteur that precedes, more than forty appear condemned to death, occupying almost two columns; but what now passes, even as seen in the Moniteur, is very interesting. The violence, the tumult, are evident, and the uncertainty of the issue. It was now of the greatest consequence what passed at Paris during this night of the 8th. Before the next sitting of the 9th took place, Robespierre flew to the Jacobins, poured his griefs into their friendly bosom, and was received with every demonstration of attachment and promise of support. One of them, Payan, proposed the right measure, that of seizing all their enemies at once, by marching instantly to the committee, where they would all be found; but this was, as before, not a measure suited to the temperament of Robespierre. He talked of drinking hemlock, if necessary, after the manner of the great sage and patriot of antiquity; and on the whole it was resolved, that St. Just, who had been recalled by Robespierre from the armies, should make a report, should be seconded by Robespierre himself; and if they succeeded not in the Convention, then they could fall back on the Jacobins in their hall, on the municipal magistrates in the commune, and on the armed force of the sections commanded by Henriot; all of whom, it was agreed, were to be at their post. This was a formidable preparation, which it was not easy to see how the conspirators were to withstand. Collot d'Herbois, however, was amongst them, and Tallien; they seemed to have perceived their danger, to have exerted themselves with great activity and effect in gaining over the members of the Convention, the old Girondists, and the neutrals; and the measures on which they seem finally to have resolved were these,—to deprive Henriot of his command, to call to their bar the mayor and Payan, and at all events, if possible, to denounce Robespierre. Tallien undertook to lead, on a promise of being followed. In the morning all the individuals of both parties were pre-

pared, as had been agreed. The mayor and Payan were at the commune, Henriot on horseback with his staff, galloping through the streets, and the Jacobins had commenced a permanent sitting. On the other side, the deputies were at the Convention before their accustomed time. Tallien stood waiting in conversation with his friends at the door of the hall; at last he saw St. Just enter, and immediately mount the tribune. "Now is the time," said Tallien. The benches were immediately filled, and the deputies sat waiting in silence for the opening of certainly one of the most awful scenes in the stormy history of the republic. This scene is very well described by Thiers: it is very striking even in the pages of the Moniteur; but the historian supplies many particulars, which better enable the reader to comprehend what was really going on: these more minute particulars cannot be expected from the Moniteur. The main facts, however, are to be found in this official gazette, and even here are very interesting. Thus, as you cast your eye over the columns, you will see clearly that it is the great debate on which the fate of Robespierre so much depended. It is opened by St. Just, who is interrupted and attacked by Tallien, who is followed by Billaud de Varennes, and who attacks Robespierre openly and violently; both Tallien and Billaud are repeatedly and violently applauded. Robespierre rushes to the tribune, and then are first heard, from a number of voices, "Down, down with the tyrant!" A regular speech and attack is then made by Tallien; the term of "Catiline" is pronounced; and the speaker ends with proposing the permanence of the sitting, and the arrest of "Robespierre and his creatures," as they are called. These propositions are adopted amidst loud cries of "Vive la république." Billaud de Varennes follows, and proposes the arrest of Dumas and others. Delmas, in like manner, proposes the arrest of Henriot, the commander of the national guard; this too is decreed, a most important measure. Robespierre is now seen violently to insist upon being heard. "Down, down with the tyrant!" is the answer. Barrère is called for. Robespierre in vain again attempts a hearing; "Down, down with the tyrant!" is again heard: and then comes forward Barrère, and appears in the most extraordinary manner, to interrupt

the proceedings at this important moment, with a long irrelevant harangue on the part of the Committee of Public Safety, occupying a column and a half of the Moniteur, and ending with a decree from the Convention. Vadier at length, and still more Tallien, brings the Convention back to the perilous discussion in which they had been before engaged. A most interesting column then appears in the Moniteur, in which is seen the altercation between Robespierre and Tallien, Billaud de Varennes, and other members. It is observed by the Moniteur, that Robespierre addressed the president and the members in the most injurious terms; the words "scélérats," "brigands," are seen in his short, interrupted sentences. The arrest is demanded of Couthon, Le Bas, and the younger Robespierre. The sitting became now of a far more furious nature than can well be comprehended by any who were not present. It was with the greatest difficulty that Robespierre could be kept from the tribune; the usual ascendancy of his eloquence and authority was justly dreaded; it was by overpowering vociferations, and main physical force, that he could alone be kept down. Tallien brandished a dagger, and avowed that he intended it, if necessary, for the breast of the tyrant. Robespierre appealed to different parties of the Assembly; to his old friends the Mountain, to the Girondists, to the neutrals; insisting upon common justice being done him. In vain; he was almost suffocated with rage, as he screamed out the last words he ever uttered in the Assembly. "President of assassins! for the last time I demand a hearing;" and as he seemed half choked with his exertions, "The blood of Danton is stifling thee," was all the answer he could obtain. When he was ordered into custody, such was the terror that the very sight of him naturally inspired, that the common officers of the Assembly shrunk back, and were with difficulty compelled to do their duty.

In this situation of things it was very unwise in the Assembly to depart from their original resolution, and suspend their sitting, as they in fact did, from their sense of fatigue, for two hours, from five to seven. During those two hours they had well nigh been ruined. During all these hours their enemies were sitting in the commune; they had received, indeed, a message of authority from the Convention, to announce to

them that Henriot was arrested, and that the mayor and Payan must come to their bar. But this message they treated with contempt; and they sent word to Robespierre that he had nothing to fear. A proclamation was issued in praise of him; war was openly declared against the Convention; a deputation despatched to the Jacobins; the sections were convoked; and the armed force ordered up. But they then, most fortunately, with the same imprudence which had been shown by the Convention, suspended their sittings also, and were not to meet till six, as the Convention was not, till seven.

In the mean time a strange circumstance occurred. Henriot, the commander of the armed force of the city, the friend of Robespierre, the officer of the commune, and the most important person in the drama, next to the tyrant himself, was seen galloping about the streets, insulting and overthrowing every one in his way: at last, having heard of the arrest of the deputies, he proceeded to the courts of the Tuileries, the palace which the Assembly had made the place of their sittings; and by the guards that were stationed there, and some of his own followers, was actually seized upon (as having been put under a sentence of arrest by the Convention), and was taken, as had been the five deputies, to the Committee of Public Safety. This part of the story is more fully given by one of the gens d'armes, who deserted him,—by Meda. His memoir is soon read, and I shall shortly have again to refer to it. When the commune, therefore, met, they had to learn not only the arrest of the five deputies, Robespierre included, but of the commander of their armed force, Henriot; and they, therefore, instantly voted an insurrection. The tocsin (the usual signal) was every where sounded; one of their members was sent to each of the sections to persuade them to bring up their battalions; orders were despatched to all the prisons, that the arrested deputies were not to be received; a dozen members, among whom were Payan and Coffinhal, were put at the head of the insurrection; and the armed force of some of the sections, and many companies of the cannoniers, and a large part of the gendarmerie, had already assembled in their favour before their place of sitting. Every thing, therefore, now turned against the Convention. When

Robespierre and the deputies were taken to different prisons, they were not received; the orders of the commune, not of the Convention, were obeyed. The deputies were afterwards rescued by the municipal officers, and conveyed to the Hotel de Ville. Coffinhal, according to the orders of the commune, with some of the armed force of the sections, repaired to the Committee of Public Safety, and delivered also Henriot, the only prisoner he found there. When, therefore, the Convention met at seven, their situation seemed perfectly desperate. Robespierre and the arrested deputies had been enlarged; their own authority was every where resisted; the tocsin was sounding, an insurrection proclaimed, and Henriot coming up, as they understood, with an armed force, to fall upon the Assembly. The members were in the greatest confusion: those belonging to the committees assembled in a room near the bureau of the president. No one had any measure to propose; it was impossible to propose any. One deputy after another mounted the tribune, stating the facts we have alluded to, and in this manner only more contributing to the general confusion and alarm. At last it was clear, that Henriot had actually arrived, as was expected, with his armed force, and that he was at that moment pointing his cannon against the hall of the Assembly: what could now be done? Bourdon proposed, that the whole Assembly should move out in a body, show themselves to the people, and endeavour to recall them to a sense of their duty. At this moment Collot d'Herbois mounted the president's chair, the most exposed place in the hall. "Representatives," he said, "the moment is arrived when we must die at our post; the national palace is invaded!" The deputies from all the different parts of the hall, where they were wandering about in a disorderly manner, instantly took their place; the galleries were evacuated by the public; and the Assembly on all sides, abandoned and left alone, sat in majestic silence, like another senate of Rome, to await their fate.

So much does courage, as the historian here observes, depend on circumstances; of bodies of men it certainly does. This was the very Assembly who had for days and months submitted, with such abject cowardice, to the domination of Robespierre.

The members of the Convention, however, did not content themselves with merely sitting still. What reasonable effort of a more active nature could be made was not omitted. Different deputies issued from the hall; and while Henriot was giving his orders, and endeavouring to prevail upon the cannoniers to fire, he was loudly proclaimed a traitor and an outlaw, and the troops were required not to dishonour themselves, and turn against their country by any base compliance with his mandates. The question, then, now was, what would be the event; which of the two the troops would obey, Henriot or the Convention? It was the Convention. They refused to fire on the Assembly; and Henriot had only to provide for his own safety by turning his horse, and making with all speed for the commune.

The Convention, therefore, had escaped; had now time to breathe. A pause had been procured, and an omen of favourable promise obtained, with regard to the military force; and yet the Assembly were evidently still in the greatest jeopardy, for the commune and the Jacobins were in far the greater force. A second attack might be made with troops more determined, and a commander more respectable. And if Robespierre had been a man of great physical courage, like Danton, or others of these desperate leaders, and any such measure instantly executed, the Convention had been undone; for the Convention all this time were inactive, and in the greatest perplexity. At last they resolved upon the right measures: they put all their enemies under a sentence of outlawry, the efficacy of which they had just seen; they put Barras at the head of their armed force, gave him seven other deputies to command under his orders, and commissioned others of their members to go and make proper representations to the different sections, and, if possible, bring up their battalions to their aid.

We have now once more a crisis in the history of this memorable struggle. The sections were in the habit of obeying their own municipal authority, the commune; they had already in part obeyed it: some of their battalions had already marched, as they had been summoned to do, against the Convention: the terror of Robespierre, and the Jacobins, still paralyzed every heart; and all these circumstances were

very ominous to the Convention. Yet, on the contrary, who was there in Paris that must not wish to put a stop to the cruelties, now daily and hourly perpetrated?

Those unhappy wretches who were confined, were all this time, through the bars and grates and openings of their prisons, communicating in every way they could with their friends and relatives; these, again, were every where communicating with each other, and wandering through the streets: the hopes, the fears, the anxieties, the contending passions of a thousand bosoms, are not to be described. At last the turn seemed to be in favour of the Convention: a sufficient military force was seen to gather around them; no fresh attack came from the commune and the Jacobins; Barras, who commanded for the Convention, was sufficiently at ease to leave them, and fly to the "Plaine des Sablons," to bring up, if he could, the Ecole de Mars to their further assistance. The turn, therefore, seemed in favour of the Convention.

But the situation of affairs, as you will immediately see on a little reflection, was of a very critical nature. For, on the other side, Robespierre and the outlawed deputies had been rescued, and were in the Hotel de Ville; a large military force drawn up in the square before them; and the members of the Jacobin club, and of the commune, with their armed force, all in insurrection against the Assembly. The sections of the city were apparently divided, and much might still be expected from them on any fair chance of success.

Both parties, the Convention on the one side, and the Jacobins and commune on the other, appeared to prepare for the next morning, and to adopt the intention of adjourning till that period, the termination of their dispute.

Here, then, was a third great crisis; and it was impossible to say what might be the event.

And now we learn from the historian, that after all, the Convention was saved at this moment by a coup de main, by a successful and sudden attack on the Hotel de Ville, where Robespierre and his friends were sitting, executed by Leonard Bourdon and the troops under his command, the particulars of which the historian proceeds to detail. But a different account is given by Meda, one of the gens d'armes then on duty, to whose memoir we have before alluded, and to which

memoir we must now again turn. He is considered as a man of veracity by the editors of the memoir; particular honours were paid to him by the Convention at the time; he rose afterwards to distinction in the French army; was colonel of a regiment when he was killed in the Russian campaign; and the last expression in the Life that is given of him is, that he was the hero of the 9th of Thermidor. The chief difference, however, between the two accounts is this, that Leonard Bourdon is made by the historian the hero of the 9th of Thermidor, not Meda; that it is to him that is attributed this sudden and successful attack on the Hotel de Ville, not to Meda, who, however, represents himself as having originally conceived, and as having been commissioned, first by Carnot and the committee, and afterwards by Leonard Bourdon himself, to execute it. The difficulty, however, was, on every supposition, to displace by persuasion or by force, the armed battalions and the cannoniers, that were in the Place de Commune, defending the Hotel de Ville, and waiting the orders of Robespierre and his friends. How was this to be done? Supposing a sudden attack resolved upon, how was this force before the Hotel de Ville to be removed or overpowered? It seems clear, as I have already mentioned, that both the commune and the Jacobins on the one hand, and the Convention on the other, thought only to prepare their strength during the night against the contest of the next morning, and had neither of them, at the time, any immediate intentions of attacking each other. This sudden coup de main was, therefore, most fortunate for Paris, and for France; the contest next morning might have been more doubtful, and the pollution of civil carnage might have been most dreadfully extended. You will see how this clearing away of the troops before the Hotel de Ville was effected, according to the recital of Meda. I will adopt his representation, and I will allude to the chief points in the account he gives.

"The head of my column," says he, "moved forward; a terrible noise ensued; my ten pieces of artillery were brought forward, and ready; those opposed to me in like manner: I threw myself between the two lines; I flew to the cannoniers of the enemy; I spoke to them of their country, of the respect due to the national representation; in short, I do not

well remember what I said, but the result was, that they all came over to us. I instantly dismounted, seized my pistols, addressed myself to my grenadiers, and made for the staircase of the Hotel de Ville." He then describes the difficulties he had to overcome, and his various perils. At last he got the door opened, and saw, he says, about fifty people together in great confusion. In the middle he observed Robespierre sitting, his elbow on his knees, his head on his hand. "I rushed upon him," he says, "presented my sabre to his breast, 'Yield, traitor!' I cried. 'It is thou art the traitor,' he replied, 'and I will have you shot.' I instantly drew out one of my pistols, and fired at him. I aimed at his breast, but the ball hit him about the chin, and shattered all his left jaw: he fell from his chair. At the sound of the explosion his brother threw himself through the window: the uproar was immense. I cried 'Vive la république!' My grenadiers returned the cry. The confusion was general. The conspirators dispersed on all sides; I remained master of the field of battle."

Other particulars, and all that need be known of this memorable night, you will see in the histories. The chief difference is, that according to the general account, Robespierre endeavoured to shoot himself, and, according to Meda, that it was he who wounded him. The deputies succeeded in the sections. On the whole the Convention prevailed, and the fall of the tyrant was procured.

Of this memorable fall the real cause evidently was, in the main, the disgust, and still more the consternation which his system had every where produced. When the members even of the Convention were obliged from a regard to their own lives, openly to resist him, and when head was at last made against him, people must in general have seen, that the cause was common; the armed force more or less participated in the common sentiment, and a little time being given by the want of personal courage in Robespierre, he and his adherents were overpowered, and the extinction of their odious tyranny accomplished. But whatever difficulty, and whatever danger there might for many hours have been, in effecting so desirable a change; however formidable and numerous, through all the day, and all the night, might have appeared

the followers and adherents of Robespierre, all Paris seemed to unite, as one man, in expressing the most unbounded exultation at his fall, when it had been once accomplished. He and his supporters in the Hotel de Ville had been taken, after the manner of wild beasts, hunted down into their den. Robespierre, above all, lay more dead than alive, disfigured and ghastly, and covered with the blood that had issued from his wound. He was sent to the hospital to be dressed, and imprecations followed him as he was carried along. He was laid on a table, his chin bound up by a handkerchief, defiled with gore, the bag that had held his pistol mechanically resting still in his hand; and as he lay, he was spit upon by some, taunted and reviled by others, and every mark of abhorrence that the mind could invent, exhausted upon him. One of the gens d'armes approached, stood looking at him for some time in a thoughtful manner, and then expressed the natural sentiment, "Yes, Robespierre," said he (alluding to the fête), "yes, Robespierre, there is a God, there is a God." "Hast thou had blood enough, monster?" said another to him.

As he was carried to execution, a woman broke through the crowd, clambered up the cart, and holding herself by one hand and menacing him with the other, "Monster!" she said, "vomited out by hell itself, thou art punished now; I am delighted to see thee here." Robespierre roused from his stupor, opened his eyes, and looked at her. "Go, wretch that thou art," she continued, "to the grave! go, go, and carry along with thee the curse of every wife and every mother." The streets were crowded, every window lined with spectators, every house-top covered. It is probable that there was scarcely a single inhabitant of Paris, that was not in some way, or at some point or other, present on this memorable occasion. The triumph was universal; it was expressed with a sort of fury. It is seldom that a surrounding crowd are not made at least mute and thoughtful, while they see a fellow creature led out to be put to death before their eyes; but it was not so now, for the criminal was not a fellow creature, it was Robespierre. As he passed along, as he reached the scaffold, no sounds were heard but those of the most triumphant joy. Even at the last, when the executioner tore off

the bandage from his wound (an useless cruelty), when the jaw dropped frightfully, and the suffering man uttered a piercing shriek, still no heart was melted, and his shriek of pain was answered by new expressions of abhorrence, and acclamations of delight.

And even now, the historian, or the reader of history, at a distance from these awful scenes, who has had no parent, friend, or brother to lament, no wife or child murdered by this unsparing man, what sentiment has he to feel?

The Almighty Master may forgive, the Divine compassion may reach his lost and fallen creature, we presume not to speak of this; but no pity, that is, human pity, can ever be brought to cast a regard upon Robespierre. He is hurried to the scaffold by his own instruments of guilt, by Tallien, by Collot d'Herbois, by his own butchers; he is cursed by his own savage populace; he is massacred by his own blunted guillotine; his ghastly head is held up by his own hardened executioner; his wretched carcass is cast, as a sort of abomination, into the deepened pit that he had dug for others; the earth is rid of him; he is punished. There is here something for the mind to dwell upon, and perhaps even with complacency; the rest is all unutterable disgust, detestation, and horror

LECTURE XLIV.

CONCLUDING LECTURE.

I AM not without my hopes, that my hearers may have now acquired some general notion of this particular period of the French Revolution, the reign of Robespierre and the Jacobins. Your attention has been directed, I apprehend, to most of the principal points, and you must fill up for yourselves the indistinct sketch that I have made. For the present, however, I will endeavour to recall them to your attention.

In the first place I remonstrated against the representations of the modern French writers, who are very able and intelligent, but always too much disposed to conceal and varnish over the faults of their nation, and who, in my opinion, betray the cause of humanity, and violate the truth of history (how little soever they may intend it, or be aware of it), while they consider the Reign of Terror as necessary to the defence of the country. There was no want of military spirit in France; the very fault of the nation has been always a passion for military glory. Nor was there any want of enthusiasm in the cause of the Revolution. Indeed, this military spirit, this passion for military glory, and this enthusiasm, furnish the only solution that can be given of the success of the French armies, are the only reasons why Robespierre and his Jacobins were enabled to confiscate the property, and take away the lives of all who were not of their own party; and why the system of terror, the moment it was attempted, was not instantly fatal to those, who could dare so to make every man their enemy.

That Robespierre and the Jacobins defied and resisted Europe, may be true: they were at the head of the govern-

ment, while the spirit of the people and of the armies enabled them to do so; and they were assisted by Carnot, a man of singular ability in military matters. But how can it be supposed, that the nation would not have repelled invasion, as they had done in the instance of Dumourier, though such atrocious men as Danton and Robespierre had never existed? And what was necessary to the cause of freedom, but that foreign invasion should be repelled? Nothing could be so fatal to the cause, and so in the end it proved, as this Reign of Terror; these massacres and confiscations; these scaffolds every day, and in every part of France, streaming with blood. Of all other men, it is the lovers of liberty by whom these Jacobins should be most detested and abjured; the very men who alone seemed disposed to tolerate them.

Having entered the protest, to which I have just alluded, against what I hold to be the misrepresentations of the more modern French historians, I then proceeded to give you extracts from them, the better to enable you to form some notion of what was suffered by this unhappy country, during the years 1793 and 1794; not choosing that you should have to depend on any representations of mine, even during the time that you were listening to my lectures. Extracts of this nature might have been multiplied to a much greater extent; but you will hereafter look at the historians yourselves. Even in these extracts, as given you, you will allow, that a state of things has been exhibited to you, totally overpowering to the feelings of any man of reflection and humanity, and well justifying me in the hope I expressed, that both the rulers of the earth, and the patriots of the earth, would take warning from the appalling scenes that were here displayed. Those scenes, indeed, had produced such an impression on the writers and reasoners of our own country, on our ministers and our orators, in both houses of parliament, that I could not but suspect that their descriptions of them, as delivered in their pamphlets and speeches, had been somewhat exaggerated; and I therefore turned to the Moniteur to see what the simple facts really were. Of what I found in this official gazette, I gave you some general notion, and I produced for you several different paragraphs.

I gave you some account of the divorces and marriages,

for instance; of the frightful approach in number of the one to the other.

Again. Some account of the Reports of Collot d'Herbois from Lyons, as a specimen of what passed there, and of what must, in like manner, have passed at Toulon, Bourdeaux, Nantes, and other places; some account of the spectacles exhibiting at Paris during all the Reign of Terror; of the number of executions, of the vagueness of the accusations, and of the various pretensions to morality, probity, and justice, made in the different sentimental addresses and declamatory speeches of the different sections and members of the Convention—nauseous and revolting to every sane mind, and even somewhat ludicrous (as far as any feeling of this sort can find place) when compared with the horrors that were all this time matters of hourly experience.

Lastly, I gave you some particulars of what passed in the Convention on the subject of the abolition of Christianity, the deification of reason, the abjuration of all other worship publicly made; and such speeches, hymns, and processions, as must for ever distinguish this period of the history of civilized Europe, and for ever form a remarkable proof to what extent human opinions may be carried, and to what extent the new opinions of these times really were carried. For we have here not the speculative opinions of a solitary individual, but national acts; the proceedings of the legislature of a country announced in the official gazette.

In this manner I endeavoured to convey to my hearers some notion of what I had seen in the pages of the Moniteur: certainly those pages exhibit a most extraordinary picture of the state of a great kingdom, and well might such a kingdom be an object of astonishment and terror to the rest of Europe at the time. On the whole, my conclusion was, that the representations of our writers and orators neither were, nor could be well, exaggerated; and I produced a striking passage from Mr. Burke, as a description of the Jacobins and their system, sufficiently justified by the facts in the Moniteurs, to which I could observe, in truth, a reference continually made, though only in one instance, that of the divorces and marriages, avowedly. In a subsequent lecture I endeavoured to call your attention to a very remarkable part of the history of

this system of terror; the manner in which the assignats were made to circulate, the manner in which a maximum was maintained by the mere terror of the guillotine. It was impossible that this state of things could last; but the system of prices affixed to every article of consumption by the legislature, not by the buyer and the seller, was carried into effect, with a minuteness and with a success, for a considerable period, that is even now totally inconceivable. There is a good account given by Thiers, and it well deserves the curiosity of any student of political economy. No doubt, the tyranny, injustice, and cruelty of this part of the system were as atrocious as unexampled.

All that I have now recounted and referred to, as taking place during this reign of Robespierre and the Jacobins, comes within the general description of prodigy; and certainly they were no common men, who were, at this period, performers on this part of the theatre of the world. It appeared to me, that these men, on account of their detestable nature, were too lightly thought of in point of talents. I therefore referred to some of their speeches and state papers, more particularly those of Robespierre, and I think this part of the general subject not without its edification; that it may be seen in what manner men the most guilty and cruel of their kind may make plausible representations of their motives and their conduct, may, under the pretext of the public good, commit any enormity, and while they are proclaiming virtue and probity, the order of the day, be in practice perfect monsters of the most savage iniquity. I must repeat, that I conceive this to be an edifying part of the general subject. Men are too apt to forget the value, the indispensable necessity of the great leading, ordinary, common-place, household virtues of the human character; too apt to forget, that unless these are exhibited in practice, and rendered visible in the conduct, the words and professions of a man are nothing; again, that ingenuity and eloquence can always make the worse appear the better reason, and that men, if they are not careful, may, by the impudent declaimers and sophisters of the world, be talked out of their principles and their common sense.

In the conclusion of my lecture I referred to the recoil that

took place from the doctrines of the atheistical school of Hebert, Chaumette, and Anacharsis Clootz, from the profane worship of Reason, which had subsisted, nevertheless, for half a year, to the acknowledgment of the two great principles of natural religion, the existence of the Deity and the immortality of the soul. This recurrence of Robespierre to these great truths I cannot but consider as a very striking occurrence. It shows, that when a nation has been once elevated above savage ignorance, and once received them, they can never be afterwards extinguished in the human heart. This could not be effected, it was now seen, even by all the unexampled crimes and horrors of the Revolution, not by the spirit of proselytism, nor all the efforts of avowed atheists; not, lastly, by the concurring influence of the public ordinances of the legislature; Robespierre must have echoed the general sentiment that resisted every attempt of this nature. I consider this event in the history of the Revolution as very memorable. Let it be added to the fact, that has been observed by philosophers, that even in the most lowly rites and worship of the most savage nations, the same leading doctrines of the existence of some great spirit, some superior being, and again, the belief of some supposed state of future existence, are distinctly seen, however rudely shadowed out, and unworthily expressed; let this historical event, and this philosophical conclusion, be placed and united together, and I cannot but consider them as concurring to show, that the Creator has vouchsafed indissolubly to unite himself with his creatures, that he has intended these two great doctrines to be a part of our intellectual nature, and that, though other evidence may be found for them, they have thus the immediate evidence of his authority.

It was impossible for me not to call the attention of the student to considerations of this kind, and I therefore extracted and read several paragraphs from the report of Robespierre, where the great sentiments of our common nature are expressed, as it appears to me, with more than ordinary force and beauty. Coming from such a man, they are surely very striking; but the truth is, that he seems always to have protested against the doctrines of the atheistical school, and he did so in the Jacobin club, at a time, and in a manner, that

would have cost, says the historian, any other man his head. Strange, it will be said, that the man who thus believed in the existence of a Deity, and of a future state, (and if of a future state, how was it not to be a state of reward and punishment?)—strange, that such a man should never be checked by such considerations in his long continued career of violence, injustice, cruelty, and blood. Yet such is the fact, and such is but too often human nature. And indeed, human nature is always a mixture of strange inconsistencies, of opposing principles, of contending vices and virtues; whose merits (I mean no apology for Robespierre, his crimes admit it not), but whose merits must not be sought in the scenes of a Revolution.

Such, I conceive, are the leading points of this subject of the Reign of Terror; but many more may be considered, and even these far more minutely and thoroughly than you may at present suppose.

I proceeded next to mention to you some books and publications of the day, where the subjects already referred to and others may be found, well deserving your attention. Of such works the Old Cordelier of Camille Desmoulins is one of the most remarkable. In him you see the recoil of a man of genius from those excesses, into which he had been hurried by political enthusiasm. I consider the history of this young man as well deserving the study of others; that the temptations of genius, both in opinion and practice, may be known. I therefore dwelt upon it; and finally, I made some remarks and gave some account of Danton and of Robespierre. The melancholy history of La Vendée I have not alluded to. You will see it in the Memoirs of M^e^. de la Rochejacqueline: it is simple, and of itself sufficiently intelligible. And there are memoirs on the subject of La Vendée and the Chouans, published by the Baudouin Frères, and now in our public library. Nor have I adverted, at any length, to the excesses of cruelty, and all the abominations of civil rage perpetrated at Nantes and other places. You will read them in the historians, and there can be only one opinion about them. I have commented upon scenes of this kind more than I could have wished, and this system of terror has now occupied me long; and I mean not to deny, that I am now become somewhat faint and

weary, by this long continuance of impressions, so mortifying, so afflicting, in every way so painful, as they must necessarily be, to the mind of any man who would wish to love and respect his kind. On the whole I now feel disposed to make a pause, and not to continue further my observations on the subject of the French Revolution. I have attended the rise and progress of the new opinions, till they, in the first place, overpowered the old; and then again, till they reached their utmost point of iniquity and absurdity. Having done this, and made such comments as occurred to me, I feel, as if such duty as I am able to perform, was discharged, and that the subsequent history of the conflict of the old and new opinions may be left to those who come after me; that it may be for them to tell the manner in which the new opinions began to retrograde from the fall of Robespierre, till they subsided into an acquiescence with the usurpation of a great military captain, and "vive la république" was exchanged for "vive l'empereur:" finally, the fate and fortunes of these new opinions during his dynasty, and the return of the Bourbons. I had long thought it unreasonable to attempt even what I have now done. I had long thought it impossible to approach the French Revolution at all; sinking down for more than two years into inertness and despair, from the apparent magnitude and importance of the subject. I have never altered my opinion of this magnitude and this importance; but I am not sorry that I submitted to the duty, which is incumbent upon every man, to do something, though he may not do much; to do his best, and be satisfied. In these few simple words will be found much of the discipline, which, in the warfare of human life, every man must undergo. And the cheerfulness which I now experience, from having observed this great maxim of human conduct, is a full compensation for the consciousness that I cannot escape, of having executed my task very imperfectly, not even in a manner I could have expected from myself, certainly falling miserably short of what I should have expected from others. Such confessions as these, somewhat too favourable to myself, I should not have thought it proper to make, were I not addressing a youthful audience, to whom such confessions may not be without their use.

In the same humble hope of being useful, I must now turn

to cast a glance on all the scenes of the Revolution we have passed through from the first, and consider, whether a few general remarks may not be made, which I may propose to you to bear away, as having been shown to be reasonable; at least, as having been insisted upon with great earnestness and anxiety during the lectures that I have delivered.

In the first place, then, my conclusion is, that neither the high party nor the low have the slightest right to felicitate themselves on their conduct during this memorable Revolution. No historian, no commentator on these times can proceed a moment, but on the supposition, that while he is censuring the faults of the one, he is perfectly aware of the antagonist faults of the other; that each party is to take its turn; and that the whole is a dreadful lesson of instruction both to the one and to the other. I have dwelt with more earnestness on the faults of the popular leaders, because their faults are more natural and more important; because the friends of freedom (hot and opinionated though they be) are still more within the reach of instruction than are men of arbitrary temperament; than courts and privileged orders, who are systematically otherwise. I speak of them as they have been generally found.

Of the different faults of the two parties, as exhibited in the French Revolution, the leading description seems to be this: in the court and higher orders, a want of sympathy, a want of respect for the opinions and interests of the community; in the popular party, an indifference to the means, on account of the end.

I will dwell a little longer, first on the one and then on the other. I do so, among other reasons for one more particularly; and it is this. The historians, that you will naturally read, are Mignet and Thiers; they are very able writers; but I conceive them to be totally unreasonable in the view they take of these extraordinary scenes. Their representation constantly is, that of the evils of the Revolution, each followed the other by an uncontrollable necessity; that the tide of the Revolution could not but roll on, could not possibly subside, till it had exhausted itself; that the contending parties of the Revolution were the necessary offspring of the Revolution; and that wisdom and counsel were but in vain.

Now, against all doctrines of this nature I have always, and must again thus finally protest, distinctly and entirely. The whole of the lectures you have heard is, I venture to hope, a refutation of such doctrines. From the first to the last I have been occupied in pointing out the faults that were on every side committed. I cannot allow, for a moment, the necessity of all these evils of the Revolution. At every turn they resulted from the mistakes or crimes of some or other of the actors in the scene: and the business of the student must hereafter be, to observe these different turns in the Revolution; to observe these mistakes and crimes; to consider how different the event might have been, how much happier for France, and for the world, if they had not been committed, and in this case, as in every other, to find instruction and a warning, in the erring or guilty conduct of those who have gone before us.

Why may the Revolution in the time of Charles I. be said to have failed?

The different parties committed faults and crimes in consequence of their political and still more of their religious enthusiasm.

Why, on the contrary, did the Revolution of 1688 succeed?

Because the parties had become more reasonable.

Why did the American Revolution succeed?

Because the people of America exhibited the virtues of the human character.

And why not the French Revolution?

Because the people of France exhibited the vices.

There is a connexion, no doubt, between moral conduct and prosperity, between wisdom and success, and between folly and defeat; but it is in vain to talk of any other necessary connexion, when we are considering the affairs of mankind.

To return, therefore, to the great practical lessons of this memorable Revolution.

Observe the reign of Louis XIV., the wars of ambition, the profuse expenditure, the immoral conduct of this celebrated hero of vanity and ostentation, the destruction of all freedom in the government. What better way than this to endanger the existence of the monarchy? Observe next the court and privileged orders during the regency, and the

reign of Louis XV.; their profligacy, their prodigality, their defiance of public opinion: I have dwelt upon them in these lectures. And observe again, during all this time, the writings of men of genius, of Rousseau and others, the agitators of the community; and again, the low publications of the schools of obscenity and atheism. What seeds for a harvest of destruction were here! How could all the actors in the scene perform, each their part, with more thoughtless absurdity, with more unprincipled guilt! Observe, again, when a young and benevolent monarch, the unfortunate Louis XVI., ascended the throne, how could the privileged orders have behaved with more selfishness and less political wisdom than they did? Are the maxims, which courts and privileged orders then adopted, as the rules of their conduct, to be ever again admitted, after the experience of this French Revolution? Were they ever (even before it) consistent with what is considered as common sense on every other occasion? Do men manage thus their physical health, their property, or any other concern in life? Do they not take medicine, submit to operations, embank rivers, clear away nuisances, anticipate evils, provide for the future? Is there not such a thing as prudence in the world, and even exercised by these privileged orders upon every occasion, but upon questions, political questions, where their own most important interests and those of the community are concerned? It is melancholy to see the blind perverseness of men in matters of this nature; and it should seem, as if even the example of the French Revolution were to have been exhibited in vain.

Turn now the picture, and look at the patriots of the French Revolution, even those of the Constituent Assembly. Their mistakes might be natural; their faults (many of them) pardonable (men with generous intentions and noble aspirations, it is not easy to condemn); but is it too much to say, that there was scarcely a mistake or fault possible, which they did not commit? What is the main question between them and Mr. Burke? Is it not this:—that they proceeded upon a totally wrong system; that their system was not that of reform, but of entire alteration; not to improve, but to begin anew? Can it be now supposed, that this was not a fundamental mistake and fault? Can it be contended, that the

events of the Revolution would have been the same, if the principle of it had been different? But the world, it will be said, was in a state of enthusiasm; the new opinions had inflamed the imagination of every good and intelligent man. Be it so. Let this then be the lesson of the Revolution; and let the world be on its guard in future against every species of political enthusiasm.

This part of my subject I have laboured to the utmost, and I have wearied my hearers with expostulations, entreaties, and remonstrances, from the very respect I bear to the friends of freedom, and from the deep interest that I cannot but feel in their success at all times. It is to them, I confess, as it appears to me, that the lesson of the French Revolution should be principally addressed, and for the reason I have often mentioned. Men of this generous and noble nature are not to suppose, that they cannot commit the most important faults; most assuredly they can: and they are not, with these French modern historians, to destroy their moral sensibilities, and to escape from responsibility, by notions of fatalism, and of necessity; by talking of revolutionary tides, that must roll on; systems of carnage, that were the inevitable result of existing situations, of parties that could not but arise; deeds of atrocity and cruelty, that could not but be perpetrated. Men are not to sooth themselves, and pander to their own impetuous or guilty passions in this daring and unjustifiable manner. The truth is, and must be, that as patriots do, or do not act, with prudence and virtue, their Revolution does, or does not succeed; and they are justly amenable, as are their opponents, in their characters and in their fame, to the community and to posterity, for the prosperity or failure of their political projects.

What could possibly be the result, if the patriots of the Constituent Assembly were so constantly to fall back on the people, refer every thing to their will, and deify their sovereign wisdom? Admit that all government is intended, not only for the coercion of the passions of mankind, but for the happiness of the community, is the community to govern, or the representatives they have appointed? There can be no doubt on this subject, it will be answered; but the Constituent Assembly were singularly situated, and could not

have made head against the court, without a continual appeal to the physical strength of the people. I must deny this position. The Assembly began with usurpation; the tide was evidently running strong in their favour; the king was not against them; the minister with them. But be these points determined as they may, was it not even in those times, and in all times, a matter of mere prudence and common sense, that an Assembly was to respect itself; was not to allow its own members to be interrupted and insulted by the tribunes; was not to suffer, surely was not to encourage, as they often did, petitions and remonstrances from tumultuous and armed bodies of people, exhibiting menacing gestures, and using vehement language in the very hall of their sittings? The different turns of the Revolution, which these French historians resolve into the effect of some high and sublime principles of fatalism and necessity, is it too much to say, that they were all brought about by mobs of the lowest of the populace, which ferocious demagogues packed into the galleries for the purpose. And what but this could be the consequence of the constant habit of the popular party, to refer themselves to the people, to submit to their outrages, and to appear to have no dependence but on the multitude? Patriots may make mistakes and commit faults, but are these to be pardoned? What was the result? Before the Assembly had sat six months, Mounier, and the most virtuous and intelligent men that belonged to it, not choosing to serve the people in their own way, as the historian calls it, retired from the Revolution, and gave up the whole cause in disgust and despair.

Thus far have I to speak even of the Constituent Assembly, and of the most virtuous and enlightened members, that made, for some time, a leading part of it.

The next great lesson, and indeed the main one, as far as the friends of freedom are concerned, is the care with which men should consider their means, when they are endeavouring to accomplish an end. The great rule of morality is, that we are not to do evil, that good may come. In a world like this, and constituted as men are, general rules encounter each other, above all, in politics; and exceptions do, and will arise, and must be supposed possible. But the general rules

of morality must be laid down (the great rule just mentioned for instance), in order that human beings may elevate their virtue to the proper point, as far as the imperfections of their nature will admit, and leave circumstances and situations to enforce their own lessons. Certainly, on all occasions, and more particularly in politics, men are too much disposed to make exceptions to general rules, and to consult their convenience, or their interests, rather than do their duty. From an early period of the Revolution, the popular leaders were guilty in this respect. It is the very nature and genius of revolutions to commit this fault; this must be confessed; still it is one of the best virtues of patriots to labour to avoid it; it is even the best policy; for men, and the multitude more particularly, soon get callous to all sense of moral obligation, when general rules are once violated, and the Revolution goes inevitably to ruin, from the want of principle with which it is conducted. Thus in the Revolution before us, the mob are tolerated in their bloody outrages and processions, till at last a dreadful demagogue starts up, and as an expedient to resist the Duke of Brunswick, institutes a regular system of massacre for several days together. Even the official authority in Paris announces and recommends it to the provinces. And this again prepares the way for the system of terror, a sort of massacre for the space of nearly two years. Again, the Constituent Assembly wants funds, and they fall upon the church; they plunder the members of it from the highest to the lowest. No proper regard to the rights of property is shown; not then, and consequently never after.

Again. All law and order are violated in the person of the king, and he is brought a prisoner to the Tuileries on the 6th of October; and from that time no sentiment of law or order could be found sufficiently strong to avail long for his protection. He is attacked in his palace, and his guards butchered; and he is afterwards, for no other reason, but that a republic is wanted, put to death.

These are among the more appalling specimens of the importance of steadiness of principle; the importance of observing ourselves, as legislators, of teaching the public, by our example to observe, as citizens, the great leading obligations of humanity and justice. It is scarcely too much to say,

that the whole of the Revolution, from the earliest periods, was marked on the part of the popular leaders by too great a disregard of their means for the sake of their ends (no doubt, with more or less of excuse, from the different exigences of the case, and the difficulties of their situation, which were often very great); still an attentive observer, accompanying them through the detail of their proceedings, will, for a long time, have so much to blame as well as to lament, and will at length, as he proceeds, find himself wound up to such feelings of indignation and abhorrence, that he will be ready to impute all the evils that happened, and the loss of their cause (for it must be considered as lost when it merged in the power of Buonaparte) to the friends of freedom themselves—the friends of freedom, as they professed themselves; to their own fault and failure, in not observing this great rule of human conduct, not to neglect the means for the sake of the end.

Nor is it sufficient to reply, as it is always replied, that the faults and even crimes of the Revolution were owing to the court first, and afterwards to the invasions of the allied powers. I consider all the great measures of the popular leaders as ill judged or criminal. Their insisting upon becoming one Assembly, their usurpation of the supreme power, their lodging the king a prisoner in the Tuileries, the Austrian war, the insurrection of the 10th of August, the massacres of September, the decree of November, the execution of their sovereign, for none of these measures (and they are the leading measures) do I see any proper necessity or justification; and all of them, as I conceive, may be shown to be in the different popular leaders, to say nothing of their treatment of each other, mistakes or crimes. To say this, is not at all to defend the unjustifiable invasion of the Duke of Brunswick, or the impolitic conduct of the allied powers in the spring of 1793.

But to return to the great faults, which I object to the popular leaders.

This disposition to forget every consideration, for the chance of accomplishing some favourite object, was not a little sanctioned by an abuse of the doctrine of utility; and I therefore directed your attention to this particular subject, this abuse

of the doctrine of utility. It may be thought, that man, acting under the influence of ambition, rivalship, hatred, political enthusiasm, and all the stormy and all the corrupt passions of this unhappy period, can little be supposed to have felt the influence of any mistakes in their moral theories, or of any moral feelings at all. But the characters and conduct of men are of a very mixed nature; and they are never unaffected by such notions of duty, as they in reality entertain. Patriotism, the public good, the cause of the Revolution, which they considered as synonymous; these were expressions that were never absent for a moment from their speeches, addresses, and manifestoes of every kind and on every occasion; and this abuse of the doctrine, this practice of resolving every thing into a separate calculation of consequences, at the instant, was very favourable, was indeed necessary, to all those acts of revolutionary violence and injustice to which we have just alluded. There was no difficulty for one of these revolutionary leaders to carry any point he chose, when an action was to be right, just as the reasoner himself determined the nature of the case and of the consequences. Measures of injustice, systems of confiscation and plunder, proscriptions, insurrections, the murder of the king, the murder of each other, the destruction of a large part of the population, of a whole town, of the inhabitants of a whole district or province, all these outrages on humanity were always announced to the public, and to the world, as acts of patriotism in the actors, as necessary to the Revolution, as evils that would be compensated by the future freedom and happiness of France, as calamities that must be overlooked, for the present, on account of the future consequences; and the perpetrators of these deeds often made it a merit with themselves, and their country, that they had been able to overpower the influence of their private feelings of sympathy and compassion, from a regard to the public weal; and the modern historians of France speak a language of this abominable nature to this hour. This new morality, as it was called, had been early and from the first denounced by Mr. Burke, and this part of his work I pointed out to you very distinctly, considering it as among the most valuable portions of his publications; and I might have mentioned also the Fast Sermon of Mr. Hall, many years after, in

1803, where the effect produced upon the mind of this very eminent writer, by these calculations of utility, and this extinction of the higher instincts and holier affections of the heart, is displayed in all the deep fervour of his piety, and in all the rich eloquence of his afflicted imagination. A very strong impression was made on the thinking and intelligent part of the community, more particularly in these islands, by speculations, that were in practice so fatal, and yet seemed not easily distinguished from the most established moral principles of the human mind; and I thought it necessary to make "the Political Justice of Mr. Godwin" the subject of a distinct lecture, conceiving that this abuse of the system of utility, to the extent it was witnessed in the French Revolution, is a most remarkable portion of the history of our moral and intellectual nature, and one of the most striking phenomena of the Revolution itself.

This new morality, as it was called, a sort of contradiction in terms, extended its influence not only over the minds of men, when acting on the most important occasions, but descended through the whole scale of their existence, and reached the most frivolous concerns of society and manners. Man is a creature of association, as he is of reason; and all his ordinary associations, and indeed his associations of whatever kind, were, according to the new notions, to be stripped from his nature. He was to be strictly a being of reason, and he was to find, amid the cold realities of life, the amusements and pleasures of his existence, and derive from the mere logic of his understanding, all his maxims of conduct, of moral and religious belief, the undisturbed security of his most ordinary rights and interests, the consolations of his state, and his hopes and dignity, here and hereafter. No part of Mr. Burke's work is more beautiful than this, or more truly philosophic and just. This part of the new morality, was, indeed, as he well described it, the offspring of cold hearts and muddy understandings. It certainly was of hearts and understandings, which the love of novelty had led astray to a degree that was unnatural, beyond all possible anticipation and example.

So far, indeed, did this rage for new speculations proceed that Mrs. Wostencroft published a treatise on the Rights of

Woman. There was no longer to be any difference between the sexes. The associations that had hitherto surrounded them were to disappear. But on this subject, it may now be observed, that the gradual improvement of society has realized all that was reasonable in the work of this new amazon, and the nonsense, for it was mixed, is now forgotten. Women are now as intelligent and as well educated as their duties require or admit; and it is probable, if Mrs. Wostencroft were now alive (the fervour of the revolutionary fever being passed away), that she would be satisfied with the point of advancement to which, for the benefit and comfort of the other sex as well as of themselves, they have so happily attained.

But the poems, treatises, and novels to which these innovations in manners as well as morals gave occasion, constitute a portion of our literature, that will always be curious to the speculating philosopher, and may even now be not a little entertaining to those, who can at all remember this most extraordinary period of the world.

As a higher sort of specimen, comprehending, indeed, much more, the subject of politics among the rest, I may mention the Anti-Jacobin; and again, much of the Pursuits of Literature, the notes rather than the text.

In this general wreck of the older notions of mankind, and triumph of the new, ample room was made for the theories of Rousseau, for visions of equality and systems of society, where government, with its restraints and terrors, was to be superseded. Rousseau was always the great writer of the Revolution. He was canonized as their saint. And it is remarkable, that Robespierre and St. Just were dreaming over plans after his manner, for the new organization of society, where "every rood of ground was to maintain its man," and Barrère had drawn out an elaborate report, as their associate minister and fellow labourer, a very short time previous to their fall, on the 9th Thermidor. Wherever the French armies went, liberty and equality were proclaimed, and "Vive la république" was the cry. The meaning of those terms was seen to be, sweeping confiscations of property, the abolition of all existing authority, and the elevation of the populace. The practice of the doctrines was fearful enough, but even the doctrines themselves, as embellished by Rousseau, as produced by the

French Revolutionists, and as exhibited in our own island, by Mr. Godwin, seemed evidently to subvert all the established notions of property and government, and to leave mankind no better chance than eternal contention, and the sacrifice of all men of intelligence, consideration, and peaceful habits, to the unbridled passions of the multitude.

When to these notions on the subject of property and government was added the new morality, and again, first the public abolition of all religion, of whatever nature, next the obliteration, though not of natural religion, of Christianity, the religion of Europe for nearly two thousand years, with all its evidences, observances, hopes, and fears, the whole must be considered as presenting a mass of hardy and desperate innovation, not only sufficient to alarm and appal, as it did alarm and appal, all the more sober and intelligent portion of civilized Europe, but as also exhibiting to the philosophers, present and future, the most astonishing example that the world has ever witnessed of the length to which human opinions may be carried. Nothing seemed too wild to be adopted, too daring, too revolting to all ordinary nature and common sense; and adopted, as I must again observe, not by any visionary in his closet (lost amidst the mazes of his metaphysics, or the wanderings of his sensibility, the fantastic subtilties of his understanding, or the delusions of his imagination), not by any dreaming enthusiast of the kind, but by legislators and public assemblies, and by large masses of mankind in one of the most distinguished communities of Europe.

And it is these frightful extravagances, of which the human mind was seen to be capable, these scenes of affliction and despair, the wide-wasting cruelties, the unutterable horrors, by which these new opinions were accompanied, that must henceforth teach their own lesson: they must show the value of every writing, usage, and institution, that can have any tendency to keep men within the paths of sobriety and duty; keep them aware of the imperfections of their nature, submissive to the dispensations and conscious of the presence of their Almighty Judge. These are the lessons, and this the permanent benefit, which, it is to be trusted, mankind will hereafter receive from this most appalling portion of the

history of Europe. In addition to this first obvious, most indispensable lesson, I must mention, as another (and though inferior) yet a very important lesson to be drawn from these times, that if the friends of freedom suffered themselves to be hurried along into excesses of opinion, like these, it can be matter of no surprise, that their Revolution failed, and that every thing connected with them and their cause, became a word of reproach and detestation to the rest of the world.

There was, however, no necessity for such excesses of opinion: there was neither truth, nor meaning, nor sense, in such extravagances; and the first duty which the real friends of freedom owe themselves and their own better cause, the great cause of humanity, at all times, is to withdraw themselves from the mistakes and faults of the earlier and more respectable patriots of the Constituent Assembly, and utterly to denounce and abjure the tenets and practices of those that followed.

I cannot now stay to weigh differences of merit and guilt in the different parties and leaders of the Revolution: I have already done so, to the best of my power, in the course of these lectures. What I wish to maintain, what I wish you to bear away from these lectures, is, that the friends of freedom are not to identify themselves with the French Revolutionists; that they are to consider those revolutionists as eminently deficient in the great, leading, and proper virtues of patriots and reformers; that neither the cause of freedom, nor any other cause, can succeed, without the exercise of the calmer, as well as the more ardent qualities of the human character; and that no example can be drawn from the failure of these inexperienced, presumptuous, giddy, unschooled, and often unprincipled, infuriated men; no example to paralyze or even discountenance the efforts of patriots, if better worthy and if properly worthy the name, cautiously, and patiently, and modestly, and with due observance of the feelings and interests of others, co-operating to improve the constitution of their country, or advance the happiness of mankind.

These observations, it is not, I conceive, unreasonable to make; for the friends of freedom at the present period, seem to me, too many of them, not to draw the proper lessons from this dreadful drama of the French Revolution. They appear

to me, to consider the privileged orders of France as *alone* in fault. No doubt they were in fault, but not exclusively so, and they adopt the general and somewhat splendid estimates and abstractions of the late French historians. They seem ready to admit, that all these calamities were necessary; that in revolutions one event leads on to another; that preventive wisdom, that prudence and moderation can, on such occasions, find no place. And as liberty must be purchased, be the price what it may, they are quite prepared to compound with convulsions and calamities, and to press forward with their improvements, at any risk of consequences; consequences, which, though they may lament, they consider as quite out of the reach of their control.

I must again and again protest against all such conclusions; they cannot, I think, be drawn by those who consider, with due patience and minuteness, the detail of these remarkable occurrences. After coming to the first great conclusion, that soon after the accession of Louis XVI., particularly after the American war, it was necessary that some change, some distinct improvement, should be made in the constitution of France; all the rest was a question of prudence and good feeling and steady principle in all the parties concerned, and the faults that were on every side committed can be now distinctly seen and stated, and were neither at the time necessary nor were even to be expected in the ordinary course of things, as the astonishment of all Europe from time to time continually manifested.

Again. The friends of freedom, the more ardent friends, I mean, of the present day, appear, in another instance, not sufficiently to have meditated the lesson of the French Revolution. They are too much disposed, after the manner of the French revolutionists, to strip men of the associations that belong to their nature; they talk far too much of their principle of utility. We admit the existence of this principle; we admit the value of the benevolent system of morals, always found among the systems of the ancient schools: it harmonizes with and practically illustrates all the higher moral instincts and intuitions given us by our Creator; properly understood, it is in no respect inconsistent with them. But that the principle of utility should be produced as a sort

of modern discovery in the moral world, is somewhat ridiculous, and as far as it has received any new interpretation, or application, or extension, it has been misunderstood and misdirected, turned to revolutionary purposes, and made inconsistent with itself.

One word more. The same more ardent friends of freedom are naturally caught by the example of America. Much that the French revolutionists attempted, is here realized:—no king, no privileged orders, no religious establishment, every thing emanating from, and continually referred to, the sovereign will of the people. But for the friends of freedom in European governments to think of assimilating their country to America, is to commit the very mistake of the more violent of these French revolutionists, and it is not to draw the instruction that ought to be derived from their example. The Americans were republicans from the first; the feudal notions and usages of European governments, their monarchies and privileged orders, never existed among them (the first but little, the last not at all). The two cases never can be made the same, even in these important points; but in another and most obvious point, they are not the same. America is a young country; it is with them eternal spring; the most immeasurable tracts of land, that may be made subservient to the purposes of man, remain still unoccupied. It would take centuries, that roll away from the eye of a speculator into perfect mist and darkness, before America can become an old government, and afford a parallel case to the governments of Europe.

But to this reasoning it will be replied, "Let, however, an approach be made." If by these words be meant, a conversion of European governments into republics or into constitutions, that do not materially differ, then, I say, that the example of the French Revolution has been exhibited in vain, and that such friends of freedom speak not the words of truth and soberness, but those of a political enthusiasm, the dreadful effects of which have been distinctly witnessed in France, and would infallibly be again renewed; it is to suppose, that no form of government can consist with the happiness of a community, but that of a republic.

At the close of my lectures on America, I have observed,

that the republican government of America, and the limited monarchy of England, for instance, are well fitted by contrast and comparison mutually to suggest hints of improvements, and to contribute to the permanent prosperity and security, each of the other. I think so still; but only on the supposition of the warning and example held out by the French Revolution being kept distinctly in view.

In a word, comparing European governments (that of our own island included), with that of America, neither can the quantity of happiness enjoyed under the one and the other be the same, nor the quality the same.

One word more at parting to those more ardent friends of freedom. I may be aware, as well as themselves, of the imperfections and abuses of old governments, and of our own, among the rest. I can see, as well as they, that even with us improvements are very slowly introduced, that the selfish interests of bodies of men and orders of men often impede, and even defeat, the efforts of those who honourably labour for the public good; I can observe, as well as they, in many places the expense, in some the corruptions of our system; all such imperfections, and abuses, and evils, I can remark as well as they, but I must declare, after making these admissions, that while reading the history of the French Revolution, I have been struck repeatedly, I had almost said, I have had eternally forced upon my consideration, the very singular merits and advantages of the English constitution. I consider this constitution as binding up into one harmonious and permanent whole, all the various contending interests and opinions, that can possibly belong to a collected mass of human beings, with a success that is quite marvellous; and I am quite satisfied, that the more the French Revolution is considered, the more will this important truth, from the effect of contrast, be felt and acknowledged. And not only is it, that this our constitution leaves every thing at liberty, and yet keeps every thing in its place, to a degree, that is, as I have said, quite marvellous, but it is impossible for those, who read the history of the French Revolution, not to be reminded, from the same effect of contrast, how fitted this English constitution is to produce regular habits of sober thought, of probity, of decency, of steady principle, of domestic virtue, of

sincere piety, and rational devotion; not the brilliant merits of the French or Italian character, but such feelings and notions as an intelligent philanthropist would be glad to observe in a people, and a legislator would consider an admirable foundation on which to build, if he meant still further to refine that people and improve them. For my own part, I have lived long under this constitution: I have seen it tried to the utmost, by times of the most unparalleled nature: I have sometimes thought, that such was its principle of vitality, that nothing could destroy it; no madness from without, no probable folly from within. The longer I have lived, the more I have admired it; certainly admired it the more, the more I have read the history of the French Revolution. I mean not to deal in general panegyrics. I have stated, as I conceive, distinct grounds for the student's love and admiration; and this conclusion of my own mind (such as it is), and this decided result, while remembering the French Revolution, and while reading the history of the French Revolution, I now leave, as a parting legacy of my lectures, to all who have heard them.

Having addressed myself to those whom I consider as the more ardent friends of freedom, I must now turn to those who would rather, perhaps, entitle themselves the friends of that very constitution I so admire, those of high notions in church and state; men with whom peace and order is the one thing needful, and who also read the history of the French Revolution, as I conceive, amiss; who draw any conclusions but the proper conclusions, from the scenes that were there witnessed. Such men are made more than ever determined in their dislike of all movement in the political world, of all inquiry and discussion, of all schemes of improvement, of all popular feelings, meetings, and privileges; and the example of the French Revolution is quoted by them, not as a reason for improving every thing in time, but for keeping every thing at rest.

This is the effect which has been very generally produced over our own islands, by the example of the French Revolution: the recoil from all popular principles of government has been very visible and very widely extended.

But I could wish to remind all such men, the lovers of peace and order, that popular principles of government, and

popular privileges, are to them, paradoxical as may to them seem the assertion, the best and only security. Where governments are arbitrary, insurrections are the usual resource; and the more arbitrary the government, the greater the chance for such calamities. Not so where popular privileges exist: patriots may there be wise, and the cause of freedom temperate; there is no movement at all, or it is of a rational nature.

Take the instance of England. A sensation is felt in the community; a tax is thought oppressive; some reform is thought desirable; some intended measure of government is deprecated: what is the consequence? A mob, an insurrection, sounds of sedition, or a tumult? Nothing of the kind. A public meeting is announced, its purposes stated, a president chosen, the speakers heard, resolutions drawn up, in a few days all the proceedings known to the government and all the kingdom; and those, who have been interested in the affair discussed, having proceeded to the length appointed by the constitution, and no further, the sentiment subsides or circulates, and at last becomes successful, sooner or later, or fails, as the reason of the case requires.

If there be any one conclusion that can be drawn more clearly than another, from the history of the French Revolution, it is, the value of popular privileges. If they had existed in France, it is impossible that the people of property, and the church, and the privileged orders, and the king, should have suffered such calamities and destruction as they did. The parliaments were aristocratic bodies, and come not within our present meaning. The people in France had no legal methods of expressing their sentiments, and none of redress.

Violence, tumult, the alarming of the persons in authority by manifestations of discontent, calculated to excite their personal fears; these were the means they but too naturally resorted to. They were exposed, from this very want of popular privileges, to be the mere instruments of furious and wrong-headed demagogues. Every great step in the French Revolution was the immediate effect of some popular insurrection. No habits of constitutional freedom existed in the country. The same was the case in the prior periods of the French history, in the time of Cardinal de Retz. Whatever

were his objects, popular insurrections seem to have been his great instruments. And it will be ever thus. And all through these lectures (and the lesson is made more than ever striking from the history of the French Revolution) I have never failed to make every effort in my power to impress upon the minds of those, who are not only of arbitrary but of peaceful disposition, that popular privileges, timely concessions, mild government, that these are the safety as well as the prosperity of a state; that these are the conclusions to be drawn from the records of history, and more particularly from the French Revolution; the very reverse of what men of high prerogative notions draw themselves, and would wish every where to be drawn by others.

Let me not be accused of having spoken all through these lectures with alternate censure, sometimes addressed to the friends of freedom, sometimes to those who are rather the friends of prerogative. This cannot be avoided: such is the nature of man, the virtues and vices run into the confines of each other; advantages are placed on the right and on the left. Neither in morals nor in politics (to a commentator on history they are the same) can a reasoner proceed a step without his balance in his hand.

Distinctions must be made, and differences weighed out. The scale will often descend with very different velocity; but weight, of some kind or other, must always be expected in each scale, however trifling in the lighter scale it may sometimes appear to be. On all occasions, through all the details of history, when different parties are to be blamed, the student, who wishes to gain wisdom from the past, should consider to which class he himself belongs, and be ready to mark not so much the faults of those who are opposed to him, as of those who are of his own peculiar temperament; for in their failings and mistakes he may consider himself as warned of the temptation that doth so easily beset him; he may receive edification where others have nothing to learn, and on the contrary, hear of faults which he is in no danger of committing.

It is not very easy to put an end to observations of this general nature, but I must conclude my lecture, and a few words may now suffice.

I have already mentioned to you that I do not think of proceeding further, and that I leave the remainder of this great subject to those who are to come after me. But I do not conceal from myself, that the more important part of it has been mine. From the period at which we are now arrived, the revolutionary fury somewhat declined; and when Buonaparte seized the government, it was the independence of every state in Europe that was at issue, rather than the elementary principles on which all society is founded. The struggle between the new and old opinions was comparatively at an end; and it is this struggle that I have had to comment upon—of all, the most memorable that has occurred in the intellectual history of civilized man, since the first great struggle for the propagation of Christianity, and the second, for the freedom of religious inquiry and a purer faith, at the period of the Reformation.

This new struggle of the eighteenth century I have had to announce to you, and call upon you to observe, how it was practically illustrated by the history of the French Revolution, and no lecturer had ever such a subject presented to him before; for my subject embraced whatever could concern the vices, the virtues, the passions, and the genius of mankind; whatever could affect the rights of property, the domestic charities; the claims of mercy and justice among men; the love of peace, the love of freedom; a sense of duty, of piety, of religion; all that is owing to our fellow creatures on earth, all that is due to Heaven. All these were to be explained, adjusted, and exemplified; and I had to warn those who heard me of the importance of reasonable principles, of the indispensable necessity of steady notions of duty, and to make them aware of what, before the horrors of the French Revolution, no imagination could ever have conceived, how wild may be the possible extravagances of the human understanding, and how desperate the possible wickedness of the human heart.

Such were the topics that pressed upon me while addressing you; and if the tongues of men and of angels had been mine, they had been worthily employed on themes like these. I might even, while musing on these things, forgetting awhile my own humble nature, and every thing around me, have

summoned up in vision before me the author of the Paradise Lost, and imitating his example, while meditating the future scenes of his immortal work, turned away from all that could be obtained by earthly succour, and thought only of addressing myself, as he did, "by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit, who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases."

But these, the workings of a diviner inspiration, must not be approached by ordinary minds. What is possible must be attempted, what is allowed by the great Creator must be done. Sufficient for me, if some curiosity has been excited, some knowledge communicated, some hints, that may be useful, afforded, the nobler qualities of the heart encouraged, the meaner and the bad discountenanced and reproved; a love of freedom, of mild government, of peace and order; a sense of duty, of piety, of religion, inculcated and impressed: sufficient for me, if such has been the anxiety, and such the diligence of your lecturer, that he may humbly hope, that the single talent committed to him by the Almighty Master, has been intrusted to him not entirely in vain.

SUPPLEMENTARY LECTURES.

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LECTURE I.

DUMONT.

NOV. 1832.

IT is more than twenty years since I first began to give lectures on the subject of modern history. The first course that I delivered, included the period between the irruption of the northern nations and the Revolution of 1688. The second extended from that event to the close of the American war. My third course consisted of such remarks as I could venture to make on the French Revolution. The period that I attempted to consider, was from the accession of Louis XVI. to the close of the Constituent Assembly. The fourth and last course extended to the fall of Robespierre. It is now my duty once more to renew my lectures, and I do so with increased anxiety. The importance of good opinions in the educated classes of society, is now more than ever obvious; but it has been so for many years. While I was first delivering lectures, Buonaparte was advancing every day in his dreadful career, and was fast subduing Europe. In my introductory lecture I was obliged to confess, that this mighty conqueror had destroyed what had hitherto been the studies of the readers of history; that there was no Holland, no Italy, and no Germany to be found; and that the treaties, and interests of states and kingdoms, as they had formerly stood, had disappeared: but I immediately subjoined, and have never failed, every successive year that I have delivered this introductory lecture, to subjoin, that though the details of history might not be considered of such importance as they once were, the philosophy of history was more than ever to

be studied; that empires might now be seen in all their different gradations of rise and progress, and more especially of decline and fall; that history was, in truth, now more than ever an object of reasonable curiosity, and even of just anxiety and necessary attention; and that whether we considered the state of our own country, or of Europe, it was impossible to say how much might not depend on the intelligence and virtue of the rising generation." With these words have I concluded my introductory lecture every year, now for a long period, and with every year they have appeared to me more appropriate to our situation. They, who were then the rising generation, are now the actors in our political concerns: the importance of their opinions will not be denied me. You, in like manner, who are now hearing me, may have still more critical offices of duty to render to your country. The transitory nature of every thing human has always been observed by philosophers; but the eternal restlessness of the minds of men has, from the close of the last century, been particularly striking: much of the improvement of society is, no doubt, to be attributed to it. This is a great good; but like every other, it is not unmixed. We may pursue shadows, we may hurry ourselves or others into disappointment, misery, and crimes; and it behoves us to be well prepared with those opinions and feelings, which are based on such foundations of truth and duty, as are not, like other human things, transitory, and against which the restlessness of the human mind ought not to prevail. It has been my humble effort always to keep opinions and feelings of this kind in your view, and recommend them to your adoption. I may or may not have succeeded; but what I would wish the student to do, is this. Let him observe the opinions that are here given, and the duties that are here enforced; and whether he admits them now or not, let him consider them hereafter in his progress through life, and note well how he sees them affected by his subsequent experience; and let him retain, or modify, or abandon them, as he then thinks proper. What I ask is, that a decision against me may not be made now. Of late years I have chiefly delivered lectures on the French Revolution; I conceived myself to have no other choice; the subject had become continually of more and more interest and importance.

In the lectures themselves, particular characters, and discussions, and narratives appeared to have no very obscure reference to what was passing around us, not only in Europe, but even in this country; so much so, that I was obliged last year to state, that I never meant, in what I delivered from this place, to mix myself in the politics of the day, and that as several observations I was going to make might appear to do so, I really should read in the way of lecture not a single line that had not been written, and even produced here some years before. And now that I am this year to renew my duty of lecturing, the same reasons which prevailed with me then, must, I think, influence me now. I mean, therefore, chiefly to direct your attention to the French Revolution, and shall begin with the first course; and the same assurance that I gave before, I must now repeat. I shall read nothing from this place that has not been written some time ago, nothing that has not been part of my lecture, as it first stood; where it may be otherwise, you shall be told. In this manner I may hope to keep clear of what I mean to avoid, all interference in our party politics.

I must, however, before I proceed, make a few observations. During all these lectures, the lesson that I am constantly endeavouring to enforce, is the duty, in politics, of moderation. You will be perfectly wearied by the repetition of this topic: admitting the principle itself, you will think it too obvious to dwell upon, and may not be at all aware of the necessity there is of presenting it so often to your consideration. But is it not necessary? I do not mean, I must repeat, to mix myself with the politics of the day, but this question, at least, I may ask, and thus far, at least, I may advert to them. Am I, indeed, ill employed, when inculcating the virtue of moderation? Look around you and reflect. Do parties hear each other? do they exaggerate? do they misrepresent? Observe the debaters on each side; look at the opposite manifestoes in the public papers, or periodical reviews, and publications; could it possibly be supposed, that the same measures or the same men were the subjects of discussion? And if it be the great interest of mankind, that their concerns should be adjusted according to the principles of truth, what is in the mean time to become of our country, while reason and truth

are evidently so disregarded? Assuredly it would be a serious praise, if I could attain it, to have it observed, that those who had attended these lectures, were afterwards distinguished for their moderation. And if habits of this kind are not acquired by you here, before your entrance into the world, certainly they will not afterwards. There is no reward on that great theatre for so tame a virtue as moderation, none but the consciousness of being reasonable; it is zeal, it is ardour in a cause, that are at a premium there—imagination, eloquence, sarcasm, invective, the brilliancy of wit, the fury of passion—it is these that obtain admiration and applause; and no office can be rendered to a community of more importance than this; that men of disinterested minds and sound understandings should guard themselves against declamation and violence on every occasion, and save their fellow creatures from the treacherous counsels of these splendid orators and writers, and, but too often, these selfish betrayers of the public weal. Observations of this kind may be illustrated by the late and present state of literature, not only with regard to the topics of the day, but even in those departments that are connected with history. The calmness, the hesitation, the correctness, which belong to such subjects, are no longer thought necessary. Instead of a disquisition, we have an invective or an harangue; the critic is an orator, often of a highly gifted nature, and his estimate of a period, or character in history, is fitted only to remind us of the speech of an advocate at the bar, or the declamation of a parliamentary leader abusing his opponent. We have the churchmen and statesmen of our history attacked and defended with as much vehemence and devotion, as if we were now their associates or followers; as if we had grown up under their patronage and bounty, and shared all the prejudices and feelings of the period in which they lived. This may be the manner in which men of great ability endeavour, by the brilliancy of their effusions, to surpass their predecessors, and especially of men who engage in the profession of writing; but the ordinary reader, in the mean time, is dazzled and overpowered; he is hurried on he knows not whither; he is made to assent to any thing that is suggested; and he has his understanding actually beaten down, and destroyed by the reiterated impulses of one dashing assertion after another, and

by a constant succession of sweeping statements, which he may or may not be competent to judge of, and which at all events it is less troublesome to acquiesce in, than to estimate and examine. An illustration occurs to me. About the middle of the last century, a review was begun in Edinburgh by Adam Smith, Dr. Robertson, and others. A small volume of their labours still remains; I have placed it on the table. Compare it with the volumes of the renowned work that followed, the quiet good sense of the one, with the unfortunate manner of the other; the regular instructors of mankind in the one age, with the brilliant luminaries of the age that has succeeded. This specimen may serve for many others that might be mentioned; for I mean not to involve myself in the literature any more than in the politics of the day. I would wish only to raise my voice, feeble as it may be, against this abuse in men, of their very extraordinary powers of eloquence and imagination; to say one passing word in the cause of taste and truth; to speak for one passing moment of the simplicity that belongs to the one, and of the sobriety so natural to the other.

It is difficult to lay down maxims in politics, whatever writers of this ambitious kind may suppose; for in politics we have to do with human beings, irritated by a thousand passions, and placed in a world where the uncertainty of events is proverbial. We can observe the general principles of human nature in large bodies of men; they will operate with tolerable steadiness on merchants, for instance, manufacturers, clergymen, courtiers; but when we have to talk of states and empires, we must remember, that these particular assemblages of men are always under the influence, often under the mere control of individuals; of those, concerning whose feelings and conduct we can, in the way of anticipation, pronounce nothing. When the events have happened, we may for the most part detect the general principles that have had their operation, on the whole or in part, and we can thus be taught what the tendency of things, in given situations, will be hereafter. This is the philosophy of history, and this the instruction: but to talk of more than a tendency in things; to speak of more than strong probabilities, and on the contrary, to lay down sweeping rules, by which the affairs of the world are to be

foreseen; to reason and to predict, as if fate and fortune were in our hands, is really quite inconsistent with the modesty that belongs to true philosophy, and with the consciousness that we ought to bear about us of the limited nature of our faculties, especially with respect to the dispensations of the Almighty in the concerns of the kingdoms and governments of the earth. Take one instance; and I could go on repeating such instances for hours. Suppose one of these brilliant writers of our own country, or of any other, had lived at the time of the Reformation, what would have been his language? How confident and how sweeping his prophecies and denunciations; what necessary connexions in events; what inevitable results! "Tremble, ye popes, and ye priests," he would have cried; "the press is now in existence; the human mind is awakened; that sublime form, which men have only to see and to adore, Truth,—Truth is now walking the earth; can the slave love his chain, the prisoner his dungeon, the blind their darkness? Will they not struggle with their manacles, will they not roll their vacant orbs, and seek to find the light? The great principles of the human mind and the human heart, are they not now called forth,—the love of knowledge, the love of freedom, and all the holy aspirations after heavenly illumination and bliss? Go on, ye angel ministers of the word, ye sages, and ye martyrs, to teach and to suffer. Ye labour, and ye may perish; but your victory is secure. The century shall roll on, but not a tyrant of the mind, or of the body, shall be found at the end of it; not a confessor nor a despot shall exist; and the humblest peasant in his cottage, as did the shepherds of yore, while watching their flocks by night, shall now hear the glad tidings of the gospel proclaimed from on high; pure religion and undefiled shall beam upon the suppliant that thirsts for righteousness, and the profane spectres of ignorance and superstition shall, with shrieks and unholy mutterings, and reverted looks of indignation and hate, be heard departing from the earth, departing never to return." Would not paragraphs of this kind, but far more bold, high-sounding, and extravagant, have been found in every pamphlet, and review, and periodical production, of the high press and the low, that addressed itself to the public, either here or elsewhere, if such instruments for good as for evil, and if the

innumerable host of our presumptuous and splendid writers had been then let loose upon the world. But what in the mean time is the fact? The century did roll on, the reformer taught, and the martyr suffered; the press toiled, and the human mind was awakened; every thing that has been just described was in part produced; the Bible was opened; civil and religious freedom obtained a footing in the world; the great principles of the human mind had their influence; were encountered, modified, and controlled, as must always be the case, by other great principles, and innumerable accidents, and unexpected occurrences; and the peace of Westphalia showed the result of the whole:—Protestant states and Roman Catholic states, all mustered and negotiating together: a rude adjustment of the rude contests of a hundred years, of all the wars that were kindled by the good and the bad, but the uncertain passions of mankind; an adjustment, indeed, but surely very different from what would have been predicted by one of these gifted seers, one of these dealers in necessity and fate, who so confidently pronounce upon the past and future fortunes of mankind.

Writers of this kind might be less objectionable, if it were not that they prepare men for revolutionary enterprises, and even reconcile them to revolutionary crimes. The peculiarities of individual character are represented as of no consequence; and therefore any man is to be rendered indifferent to character, either in himself or others, while some great project is pursued. Every thing is described as under the control and at the mercy of general principles; and why, therefore, talk of the particular virtues and vices of men, or lose our time in considering the wisdom or the folly of statesmen or of kings? A government is bad; a revolution, it is said, must ensue; revolutions must be followed by crimes; it is in vain to contend; a future age will be benefited, and that is sufficient. So short is the reasoning, so clear, and so consoling. The sufferings of the pious, the innocent, and the good; the triumphs of the savage and the licentious; the agonies of the wife and mother; the success and splendour of the unfeeling and blood-stained ruffian; these are but the storm that is to pass away, the necessary preparation for the sunshine that is to follow: it was ever thus, and it will be ever. Such is the

language, such the doctrines of modern writers and historians of our own or other countries, especially of France. I trust those who hear me, will not surrender their minds to such daring generalities, such merciless receipts for procuring the happiness of mankind; such intolerable exhibitions of human ingenuity, fit only to paralyze our virtues, and throw splendour around our crimes; to leave in one miserable mass of similitude and confusion, the wise, the benevolent, the thoughtful, and the humane, with the unprincipled, the selfish, the presumptuous, the cruel, and the absurd; the exalted lover of his kind, with the detested of God and man. I shall have to speak of these things hereafter; they are an often renewed theme in the course of the lectures I give on the French Revolution, for the mistakes I thus arraign are every where found in the historical and political writings and critiques, that have of late years and are now every day appearing. Turning however away from them, for a time at least, you will, I hope, be content to follow me through a more humble path, while I consider, step by step, every part of this memorable Revolution; the faults and the errors, to the best of my power, of all parties concerned, weighing them in the balance, as you will yourselves be weighed in a balance by those of your fellow creatures that surround you, and while I speak of these leaders of the Revolution, and their opponents, as human beings capable of virtue and of vice, of wisdom and of folly, and exposing themselves and their country on a large scale, as you may, yourselves and your connexions on a small, to the varying chances that result from prudence or rashness, from ignorance or knowledge, from virtue or the want of it. To do this, is but to conform to what we every day experience, and what mankind has been accustomed to practise, from the first ages of the world, by never ceasing to bless their patriots and execrate their tyrants, and by criticising on every occasion their rulers, as moral and responsible beings, on whom their happiness and misery essentially depended.

So little am I disposed to solve the phenomena of any political case before me by these general theorems of modern reasoners, that I have studied with all diligence, all the accounts I could meet with of the French Revolution, and all

the memoirs I could find of those who were actors in the scene. I have thought myself properly employed, while commenting on the conduct of such men, and while endeavouring to consider how the Revolution might have been avoided, how at least it might have been modified, what calamities might have been escaped, what horrors saved, by a different policy, by a different exercise of prudence and virtue in those who took a part in these concerns. Now that I have drawn up my lectures, I do not yet think myself exonerated from a duty of this kind; and I look to memoirs and accounts, whenever I can hear of them, to see how far my representations have been accurate, and how far those peculiarities of individual character, on which I hold so much depends, have been faithfully described. I cannot but recommend you to do the same; and I must request your attention during the remainder of this lecture, while I mention some publications that have lately appeared, and while I actually go through the detail of considering, whether they do or do not confirm such conclusions as you will see me arrive at in the course of the lectures I am now going to repeat. It is not enough to vote, that things must necessarily roll on in this or that direction; we must examine the facts.

The first book I have lately met with, was an history of the Constituent Assembly, by Alexander Lameth. Though I had already endeavoured to understand the labours of the Constituent Assembly, I spent a week over the work to ascertain what new light might be let upon their proceedings, by a writer who was one of their more distinguished members; but the publication has disappointed me; there is no secret history, though his name continually occurs, as a leader connected with La Fayette, and though he must have had much information to give, if he had chosen to afford it. But he professedly avoids every thing of this nature, and means only, he says, to give a clear and exact account of the labours of the Constituent Assembly; and, as such, the work is valuable. It is great injustice to suppose, as it is at present the fashion to suppose, that the members were not, many of them, men of great ability. I have observed this in my lectures; and what I have there said will be amply illustrated by these two volumes of Alexander Lameth. The debates of this Assembly

do very great credit to the talents of the speakers; the votes may not always be right, but every subject is very fully discussed, and they who were wrong, were not so from want of any ingenuity or eloquence in those of their opponents who were apprizing them of their errors. Indeed their debates, and the Revolution itself, would be much less worth considering, if it were otherwise. What can be learnt from the proceedings of foolish and bad men? It is from the faults and errors of wise and good men, that instruction is to be chiefly derived. There are a hundred pages of preparatory matter containing many observations, such as you will hear from me hereafter, on the Memoirs of the Marquis de Ferrieres, Lacretelle, Montgaillard, and M^e^. de Campan. He considers the Revolution to have been brought on by the parliaments, the nobility and the clergy, who had been so long accustomed to declare war against the government, and give the signal of insurrection to the people. "Was it not," says he, "such disorders, and the want of money, that forced the crown to resort to a call of the States General? They who read my work (he says) will consider me as a partisan of the Revolution. I am far from defending it. I have been deeply afflicted by the excesses that have taken place in the Constituent Assembly, and outraged by the crimes that followed on its dissolution. These calamities have but confirmed the truth, acknowledged from time immemorial, that revolutions, particularly popular revolutions, are dreadful catastrophes. Yet must I still regard the Revolution as one of the greatest steps that civilization has made; great principles have been (he says) established." He sees them in the charter of Louis XVIII.; great results; great advantages for all classes of society. He writes in 1828; and he must suffer much to see the horizon still so clouded. On the whole, the work is worth reading, especially by those who shrink from the task of going through the debates in any more detailed manner; it is to be considered as, in the main, a defence of the Constituent Assembly, conducted in a manner not unfair, by exhibiting what really passed there. The work has been occasioned more immediately by the unjust and declamatory attack of Lacretelle, and the disparaging observations of the Marquis de Ferrieres and M. de Montgaillard.

Another work has lately appeared, in its title of the most

interesting nature, for it purports to come from the late king, Louis XVIII., and to be the observations of his past life. On what authority, therefore, does the publication stand? No question of this kind can be asked with more earnestness than this has been, both in London and in Paris. There is no external evidence for the work; no manuscript is shown; no editor makes himself responsible; a Duc D—— only is mentioned in the title page, who may be a real person or not; and when the authenticity of a work is the first and great point to be determined, if a plain story can be told, why is it not? The men of letters in Paris, too, are notorious for impositions of this nature: the ease and ability with which they dress up their forgeries is as astonishing as is their total want of all moral principle in bringing forward these deceptions. It has actually been found necessary to draw up a regular account, to make a regular book, a thick octavo volume, where may be seen a list of all the doubtful and spurious books that have issued from the French press; and the book is continually increasing. I will mention an instance. During the French Revolution, the Letters of Louis XVI. were published in Paris. Helen Maria Williams, then on the spot, gave a considerable sum for the manuscript, and translated it; she had no doubt of the authenticity of the work: the Edinburgh Review pronounced in favour of it, in an article written by so considerable a reasoner as Francis Horner: it was quoted in one of the chambers, after the Restoration, as genuine. After all, the whole turned out to be a forgery; and two impudent men came forward, and avowed that they had thought it a fair literary enterprise one morning after breakfast; and as to the sin and crime of making the poor king answerable in his character to posterity for any thing they might choose to attribute to him, and of deceiving and misleading all who were to write or think, from that time forth, on such a subject as the French Revolution, no considerations of this kind seem ever once to have occurred to them. Nothing, therefore can be more improbable than that the work we are now considering, attributed to Louis XVIII., should be genuine, as far as the external evidence goes. But the internal evidence? Here, indeed, there is something to be said; indeed, I think, much to be said in favour of the work.

But internal evidence is always a matter, not a little, of

feeling; and such mistakes have been made, that unless external evidence is also produced, no matured mind can ever rest properly satisfied with evidence that is only internal. An instance occurs to me—the beautiful poem on the Burial of General Moore. Who ever for a moment supposed that it came not from the pen of Campbell? But it did not.

On the whole of the case, then, if this publication should appear, in the event, to be of authority, I shall have to consider it; but in the mean time it may be sufficient for me to observe to you, that I do not perceive any thing in it that materially militates against such representations as you will hear me make in these lectures*.

Another work has also appeared, respecting which, fortunately, there is no doubt—the work of M. Dumont: every thing is known of it that can be required. M. Dumont was a very distinguished man of letters, originally of Geneva, and who lived much in London; well acquainted with some of the first men of the time, and highly estimated by them for the variety of his knowledge, the extent of his views, and his many virtues and amiable qualities; and the work is an account given by such a man of what he could recollect ten years afterwards of Mirabeau, with whom he was connected, and of the Legislative Assemblies, particularly of the Constituent Assembly, at whose debates he was often found during the earlier parts of the French Revolution. There could be no want of interest in a book like this; and it so happened, that it arrived in London in the midst of our unhappy divisions on the subject of the Reform Bill, while the instance of the French Revolution was brought forward by writers and speakers on each side with great earnestness, and often with great effect, to illustrate their reasonings and justify their conclusions. The opinions and comments of a distinguished writer and philosopher like M. Dumont, at a period such as this, had even a more than natural importance, and particularly as he was known to be a warm friend of the

* Some time after this lecture was written, Mr. Croker very laudably took the trouble of exposing, in the Quarterly Review, the sources from which this unprincipled work was compiled; and it has never been heard of more.

liberties of mankind, and as his recollections were found to be not a little disparaging to the Constituent Assembly and the popular party. Even to me this publication was an event of considerable importance. I had been acquainted with M. Dumont, seen him often, and benefited by the variety of his literary knowledge, and his sensible observations (so they appeared to me) on every subject in its turn. Being at the same time well aware how conversant he was with every thing that related to the French Revolution, I was not a little anxious to ascertain how far his views and opinions, as seen in this new publication, went to confirm, or not, what I had delivered in these lectures. I therefore applied myself to the work, with all the diligence in my power; and some of the observations that have occurred to me, I will now proceed to lay before you. In the first place, then, I must remark that this work ought not to be represented as a description of the evolution of any conspiracy in the popular leaders against the old government; no such conspiracy is here ever thought of: nor, again, is his work any précis of the French Revolution, how it arose, or what are to be its effects hereafter in France; it is merely a description of such faults and errors in the popular leaders and the people, as had a tendency to prevent the success of the Revolution: least of all, is it a work where such faults and errors are considered, as, in revolutions, a matter of course. It is all along taken for granted that the crimes and miseries which so often accompany them ought to be prevented, and can be prevented by the virtue and prudence of those who engage in them; nor would a word in the work be altered by Dumont, as far as the popular leaders are concerned, were he now living, or had again to write it. The faults and errors he describes in part caused, and were enough of themselves to cause, the failure of the Revolution; this is sufficient for Dumont. He is not a writer that would ever have entered into any dreadful calculation, how far present crimes and miseries are to be compensated by subsequent prosperity; his humane effort is to prevent from the first all crimes and miseries, and to teach political men a little sobriety of thought and conduct. He therefore exhibits and records those faults and mistakes which he had an opportunity to observe in the popular leaders; and to these he may be said to

confine himself. In these lectures which I here deliver, indeed, I endeavour to do more, for I attempt to describe the faults and mistakes that were committed by the court and privileged orders, and which had so powerful a tendency to prevent the success of the Revolution. To these M. Dumont does not direct his attention; they were taken for granted by him: he was known to be a warm friend to the popular cause; it never occurred to him that he was to give his reasons for being so: he was writing no history, nor even any account of the French Revolution; he was recollecting only, at the distance of ten years, what he had seen and felt, while an eye-witness of the scene. The work is a mere collection of sketches: what he knew of Mirabeau, what he had observed and lamented in the conduct of the Assembly and the people; no doubt such mistakes and faults as he thought ought to be a warning to any people struggling for its liberties, and to all leaders of revolutions hereafter; but certainly as constituting only one part of the case, in no respect as the whole of the lesson that was to be drawn from the French Revolution; and surely not such faults and mistakes as might not, and ought not to have been avoided.

In the lectures that I am going to deliver, you will find me describing the faults of the popular leaders at great length, and sometimes, perhaps, it may be thought with impatience and severity. It was a relief to me to find, from M. Dumont's publication, that I had not mistaken the nature of those faults, and that the warning I had given to the friends of liberty was right. This was a relief, for it could least of all be my intention to do injustice to the cause of freedom. But it is the faults of those who step forward in this cause that are of all others of the most importance; and though to be touched with no unfriendly hand, they must be adverted to, that this great cause may be managed with that prudence which it is at once so difficult to produce, and which is yet so necessary to its success.

I will now mention to you some few of those unfavourable representations and strictures of Dumont on the popular leaders, which confirm such as I have hazarded myself in these lectures. There was nothing, it seems, of this prudence which I have just alluded to, at the breaking out of the

Revolution. You will see Dumont intimately acquainted with the leading people in Paris at the time, present at their committees, and quite disgusted at their nonsense, and at the chaos of their opinions; the wild hopes, the contending interests, the confusion, and the cabals; the delays that were thus occasioned in the elections that were to be made by the sections: above all, he remarked what was the great point contended for by Mr. Burke, that the past went for nothing; and while he was himself, with a good sense that was very remarkable at that period, referring always to England for his ideas of liberty, such wisdom was a perfect scorn to the popular leaders at the time, with some brilliant exceptions, however,—Mounier, Lally Tollendal, and others. In the third chapter, and in the note, an amusing account is given of the folly of the celebrated Abbé de Sieyes in this particular. He considered the English, it seems, as mere infants in the science of government, and himself as a perfect master; an ignorance and a presumption that no doubt were shared with him by many others at the time. In the eighth chapter of the work, there is a very beautiful contrast of the English and French character. "Let me stop," says Dumont, "a hundred people in the streets of Paris and of London, and propose to each, on the part of government, something to be done; there will be ninety-nine in the one place that will instantly undertake it, and as many in the other that will decline it. Romilly," he continues, "had drawn up a work of the most interesting nature, on the rules observed by the House of Commons in England—rules," he says, "the fruit of a well considered experience, and the more to be admired, the more they are examined; customs carefully preserved by an assembly very watchful against any innovation: they are not written, and it required great care and pains to exhibit them in order. This little code was to show the best way of putting the questions, of preparing the motions, of debating them, of collecting the votes, of nominating the committees, of managing business, by making it pass through different stages—in a word, all the tactique of a political assembly. "This work," says Dumont, "I translated at the commencement of the States General; it was presented by Mirabeau, and laid upon the bureau of the Commons; and when the question was, whether it was to

be a rule for the National Assembly, 'We are not English, and we have no want of the English,' such was the answer that was received; not the slightest attention was paid to this document, though it was printed; no one condescended to inform himself of the proceedings of a body so celebrated as the parliament of Great Britain; the national vanity was hurt at the very idea of borrowing from the wisdom of any other nation, and they chose rather to persist to the end in a mode of deliberation of the very worst and most dangerous nature; witness the sitting of the 4th of August." Again. "There was an intention of introducing Mirabeau into the ministry, but a motion was carried upon some idle principle of democracy, that no minister should be a member of the Assembly. It was in vain," says Dumont, "that the example of England was produced; instead of making in favour of the measure, it made against it. The slightest idea of imitation wounded the vanity of these innovators; they pretended to make a monarchy without a single monarchical element." Such are the words of Dumont. Now, I must observe, that this is from beginning to end the great drift of the book of Mr. Burke; and to perceive the truth at Beaconsfield so early and so distinctly, whatever may be said of the unfortunate intemperance of his prejudices, is a specimem of his political sagacity never to be forgotten. The vanity, the self-conceit of the members of the Assembly, more particularly of the popular leaders, ruined every thing. This is the constant language of Dumont; it was the constant torment and terror of his thoughts while in the midst of them. Now, is it too much to say that this vanity, this self-conceit, is but too naturally allied to men of popular feelings, while young, and to all such men, whether young or old, when starting up from unexpected situations in society, and obtaining notice, by exhibiting themselves on public occasions, in addresses, meetings, and associations? "Every member of the Assembly," says M. Dumont, "supposed himself capable of any thing. Never was seen such a number of men who conceived themselves to be all legislators; who supposed that they were then to repair all the faults of the past, to remedy every error that had been committed by the human mind, and to ensure the happiness of all future ages. Doubt had never for a moment

any access to their minds, and infallibility presided over all their contradictory decrees. It was in vain," says he, " that a numerous minority told them their faults, and protested against their decrees; the more they were attacked, the more they were satisfied with themselves; and when the king made some remonstrances in the most modest manner against their decree of the 4th of August, and their declaration of rights, they were astonished that ministers should have the audacity to make comments on their labours, and Necker, who was the author of them, began to decline in their favour." Such are the words of Dumont. No doubt, I may observe, personal vanity is not the character of our own English nation, and we are each of us so quick in observing it, and so readily disgusted with it in others, that it is to be hoped that many ardent men among ourselves may be kept in check by the salutary phlegm and good sense that naturally belongs to an English community; but the strong sensations of Dumont, when brought into contact with Barrère, Barnave, Pétion, the Abbé Sieyes, Brissot, Paine, and almost every public man he met, should not be lost in the way of example and admonition, to all who, like them—and they were no common men—are engaged in the task of improving the institutions of their country. There is even in human nature sometimes to be found a delight in mischief, and there are those, who, though not ferocious in disposition, are disturbers of the public peace, from mere taste and perverseness. Look at the character of Clavière, a living portrait, and the type of a thousand others, as drawn by Dumont in the twentieth chapter. " Always attacking authority," says Dumont, " though afraid of danger; fond of troubled waters, though not of the consequences; maintaining," says he, " that in a free state political agitation, though not harmless, does a great deal more good, and throws people into a much more agreeable mood than they would experience amidst what he termed the insipidity of repose. He had even his fancy," continues Dumont, " for anarchy, and produced his sophisms in defence of it; his activity knew no bounds; he would get up in the middle of the night, write fifty pages, go to rest for an hour, and totally neglect his affairs; yet was he an honest man, and disinterested; office improved him, it seems." Such is the description given by Dumont. Real

business and responsibility probably taught him some lessons; this sort of busy, troublesome, wrong-headed character, not to be reasoned with, and sometimes thought, fit only to amuse, is in critical times a perfect nuisance and scourge to society. It is drawn from the life by Dumont; but the character is as old as the Proverbs. "There is one that scattereth arrows and death, and says, 'Am I not in sport?'"

It is a great pleasure to me to find that the views I have taken of the French Revolution, and the characters of the principal actors in the scene, are sufficiently confirmed by the work of Dumont. He corroborates what I have said of the Constituent Assembly, and of the events that passed during its sitting; what I have said of La Fayette, of Necker, and of the king; and again, what I have said on more doubtful and difficult subjects, the subsequent conduct and character of the Girondists and the Austrian war. Hereafter, as I read my lectures, I may notice briefly such of M. Dumont's observations as may be fitted to corroborate or modify my own. You will find him not a little scandalized by the proceedings of the Assembly on the night of the 4th of August. "He did not," he says, "concern himself in the discussion respecting the property of the church; he had, however, his opinion, that it was unjust to despoil the clergy, to pay the national debt. The reduction of the salaries of future ecclesiastics might be compatible with justice and prudence, but it appeared to him quite essential not to diminish by a single farthing the engagements of actual possessors. He had disputes," he says, "even with some of the beneficed clergy themselves; and he appealed to the practice of England, where it was always a sacred principle never to make reforms at the expense of present possessors. But in France," he observes, "no one had any ideas of this kind: the old government had violated the principle with respect to the Jesuits; Necker, when making his economical reforms, never troubled himself about the individuals who were to suffer, it was favour enough to leave them the necessaries of life; the inflexible Camus, because he did not put the spoils of the pensioners of the state into his own pocket, was supposed a perfect Cato, and this, while he was multiplying decrees that made thousands of people wretched, and not one happier: but what reformers,"

continues Dumont, " are men like these, who have no receipt but to sacrifice one set of people to ameliorate the condition of another? At this period one would have supposed that the ecclesiastics were not a part of the nation. The Assembly itself did not carry their prejudices so far," says Dumont, " but we know sufficiently how far they did carry them, and how the people and the demagogues improved upon the example which had been set them by the legislature." Governments, when they commit an act of injustice and wrong, never set a precedent which stops there. Indeed, all through the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly, the general looseness of principle on the subject of property is very remarkable; and this must have been not a little owing to the composition of the Assembly. Dumont mentions, as one of the causes of the faults of the Assembly, the too great proportion of people without property and of lawyers, who run into extremes in their democracy. These were probably young men, and such as had their fortunes to make. Those, who with us in England, are our country gentlemen, almost all belonged to the noblesse: the mercantile class was little in the habit of taking a share in public discussions. In the composition of the clergy, too, there was far too large a number of the curés; this was a mistake of Necker; most of these consisted of men with little or no property. The prejudice of the people in this country in favour of persons of property is quite right; the habits of thought that belong to such men are very favourable to sound legislation and just government, and well fitted to promote and secure many of the best interests of society. The interval that elapsed during the dispute between the Tiers Etat and the two orders, was fatal in its effects, by throwing every thing into the power of the former, and this power was consummated by the assumption of the title of " National Assembly." " So to call themselves was to count for nothing," Dumont observes, " the king, the nobility, and the clergy." I have held the same language. It was carried by a majority of six to one. And the fourth chapter gives some curious particulars on the subject, and is worth your attention, but more especially would I recommend to you the remainder of the chapter; it concerns the state of Versailles and Paris at one of the most critical moments of the Revolution, prior and during the

sitting of the 23rd. I have represented this sitting as the hinge on which the whole turned; as the ultimatum which the court offered to the people. I have always contended, that it ought to have been accepted by the popular leaders. The American, Jefferson, I afterwards found had said the same at the time, and when on the spot. The project of the measure of the 23rd, it seems, originated with Dumont's friend, Duroverai. On this most important measure ample information is given by Necker himself, of which I have availed myself. Considered in itself, never were such concessions made by a king to his people; and at any other time they would have excited the most hearty acknowledgments. Such objections as I have made to the conduct of the court (they were but too obvious), their total want of all precaution and management, are made also by Dumont, and from this moment he dates the ruin of the monarchy. "It is in the state of parties and their violence," says Dumont, before he comes to this point of the Revolution, "it is in these that one must seek for the origin of events. One must have been witness of the fermentation that existed to comprehend what afterwards followed. Historical facts, stripped of the circumstances that prepared them, are inexplicable. The atmosphere of Versailles, so to speak, was ominous and on fire, and the explosion that was coming could not but be terrible." Such are the expressions of Dumont. We have here, you see, nothing of the fatality of Thiers and Mignet, and other modern writers and historians. I have been given to understand, that Dumont, with other intelligent writers and historians, all agreed in reprobating these doctrines of fatalism, when they first appeared in a regular form, as the explanation of history, in the work of Mignet. This very measure of the 23rd, if considered in all its critical importance and attendant circumstances, as it is detailed in Necker's own account, and in his histories, is of itself a remarkable instance to show, how improper it is to introduce this doctrine of the schools into the practical affairs of the world. And finally, I have to observe, that the reflections of Mr. Burke, while sitting in his study, were, as far as the Constituent Assembly went, in the main, the same with those that were passing through the mind of Dumont, while a witness of the scene, and personally

engaged in promoting the success of the Revolution to the utmost of his power. Their opinions on the whole of the case were not, indeed, the same; but in their views of the composition of the Assembly, of the faults of the Assembly, and many other important matters, they sufficiently coincide.

Such is the short notice that for the present I can take of such views and opinions as I have found in Dumont, of a nature to corroborate what I have ventured to observe in the course of these lectures, first in the way of censure of the popular leaders, and next with regard to the bearing of some particular measures. Of the latter I may take some further notice hereafter. The great defect of the work of Dumont is, that he has too much omitted all reference to the faults of the court party, while he is describing the faults of the popular party, those with whom he lived, and the members of the Assembly; and this will give an undue advantage to writers and reasoners who too much resemble that court party, and by whom this otherwise most valuable work will be always quoted and appealed to. These faults of the court party were, however, very real, and must not be forgotten; they were first in order of time, an important circumstance. It is not unjust to say, that in the court and privileged orders there was a total want of sympathy with the interests of the community. Of the benevolence that was always so visible in the king, not a spark was ever to be seen in those around him; all his efforts before and during the administration of Necker were thus rendered vain. Necker's own conduct and measures were injuriously affected by it. His great measure of the 23rd, the last that could be tried, was ruined; so were Calonne's; so those of the first patriots and revolutionary leaders. Again, those in like manner of the Legislative Assembly and the Girondists (I defend neither), were unfortunately influenced by the conduct of the court and the emigrants. The Austrian war found here its justification in the minds of the French public, the proximate cause of all the ruin and horrors that ensued. It is impossible not to take into account the faults of the court and privileged orders, more particularly at the beginning of the reign, and the earlier parts of the struggle. It is true, that with these faults Dumont did not concern himself: in justice to him, this must be

observed, though notices of them occur which sufficiently show his opinion. His book, never intended to be a regular work, is a description of the faults of his own party, and it is on that account a work quite invaluable, such as no one had ever the candour, the probity, and the philanthropy to write before. If public men, if leaders of parties and public meetings, would consider a little more their own faults, and a little less those of their opponents, the affairs of the world would go on in a much more rational manner. There is a fallacy constantly resorted to by our public speakers and political writers, which, little as I wish to refer to our politics, I think it my duty to warn my hearers against, most distinctly. Our debaters of every kind, the most respectable of them, are advocates after the manner of feed counsel, rather than senators judging of and applying an historical case: they seize upon that part which they think to their purpose, and that which is not, and which ought equally to be produced, is totally set aside and passed by; and if there happen to be no adequate knowledge of the subject in the opponents of the speaker, a victory is obtained, quite unfair and improper. On the contrary, Dumont, who was of the popular party, not only gives a critique on the faults and mistakes of that popular party, but gives an unsparing one. In the course of it may be found paragraphs which the greatest hater of popular leaders, and popular assemblies, and innovators, and reformers of every description, would have been glad to have written, and would not have written more strongly, if, like Dumont, they had been witnesses to the scene. These form the instruction of the work; but instruction will not be derived from it unless men will be candid and reasonable. Never, it is true, never was such a lesson to men of popular feelings; but men of opposite feelings are not to suppose that this is the whole of the case. Do they imagine, that if M. Dumont had been as intimate with the Count d'Artois and the court, as he was with Mirabeau and the patriots, that he could not have drawn up a lesson of equal force and truth, to be an eternal warning to them also, and all who are hereafter to resemble them? Would not the same good sense, and enlightened sympathy with the best interests of mankind, have animated his composition in the one case

as in the other? Take a paragraph that presents itself in the seventh chapter, to show the rigid justice that he administers.

"The Assembly," he says, "had such a terror of offending the people, that it regarded almost as a snare, every motion that had a tendency to repress these disorders, and to censure popular excesses; it was by the people they had triumphed, and to the people, therefore, they had no power of showing themselves severe. On the contrary, though the Assembly declared often in their preambles that they were deeply afflicted, and even indignant at the outrages committed by the banditti and brigands, who burnt the chateaux, and insulted the nobility, in secret they rejoiced over a terror which they esteemed necessary. They were placed in an alternative, either to make the nobility fear, or themselves to fear the nobility: they blamed for the sake of decency; they kept fair with those they blamed, from policy: compliments were paid to authority, and encouragement given to license: respect for the executive power was but a formulary of style; and at bottom, when the ministers came to show their weakness, and betray their non-entity, the Assembly, too ready to remember the fear that they had once entertained of them, were not very sorry to think, that the fear had now changed sides. 'Were you powerful enough,' they said, 'to make yourselves respected by the people, you would be enough so, to be a terror to us.' Such was the sentiment that appeared entirely to influence the left side; it was the reaction of fear."

Now, what a paragraph is here to show the base servility to which popular leaders may be made to descend, the guilty and dangerous cowardice into which they may fall; what a lesson of instruction, when we consider more especially the events that followed, is for ever held up to them; with what delight and triumph will such a paragraph as this be hailed by those of opposite sentiments! But should it not occur to such men, to ask themselves what there is, on the other hand, to be said of those, who will never make any effort to correct abuses in time, who will never suffer them to be made by others, until the people are thus brought forward to terrify them. They know perfectly well that popular leaders are likely to act on the ordinary, paltry principles of human nature,

as Dumont here reports the Assembly to have done, and yet will they never make any timely concession, never any prudent sacrifice of their own interests or opinions, to prevent their opponents from thus throwing themselves into the arms of the populace.

Many like paragraphs may be found in this posthumous and unfinished work of M. Dumont, and the work will be a perfect treasure to be delivered to mankind, if it be but fairly treated; if it be but considered as a statement, not of the whole of the case, but of that part of it only which the author had a more immediate opportunity to observe; if it be considered that the faults here described from the life, are connected with antagonist faults, that might equally have been produced by Dumont, if he had been in the confidence of the inmates of the Palace of Versailles: but if, on the contrary, it is made a manual and text book for men of arbitrary opinions, a magazine where such men are to find arguments to justify their unfortunate notions, and their aversion to all men who find any fault in the institutions of their country, and propose any changes for the benefit of the people; if such be the uses to which this remarkable publication is to be turned, the work will become any thing but a treasure to mankind. The singular merit of this friend of liberty, while making his confessions, and speaking from a situation of a most extraordinary nature, will be lost, and effects will be produced, that this good man, this enlightened man, this amiable, sensible, and honourable man, would be of all others, were he now alive, the first to lament, and the most anxious to deprecate.

We have another work (a work of our own) well fitted to benefit mankind, like this work of M. Dumont; but only on the same conditions, it must be fairly used,—the Reflections of Mr. Burke. Never was such a mirror of instruction held up to all men of popular feelings, of whatever country and age. The great maxims, the fundamental truths it contains, are not only invaluable, but are innumerable. I must beg to observe to you that I read it over and over, and as the events of the world come changing and crowding upon me, every year with more and more admiration, at the profound philosophy which it contains, at the extraordinary powers which could have produced it. But then it is an indictment, not an estimate, of

the National Assembly; an exhibition of all the faults that they had committed, and that all men of popular feelings are for ever exposed to commit; it is an eternal lesson and warning to all such men, but it is not from this, to be concluded by men of opposite opinions, that they have not also their lessons and warnings to receive, though they must not suppose they are to find them in the Reflections of Mr. Burke. Observe the candour and propriety with which M. Dumont speaks of this very work, though he was living at this period with those in this country and in France, who resisted both the work and its author, as opposed to all the genuine principles of liberty, and the best interests of mankind at the time. "The first considerable check," says Dumont, "that was given to the general enthusiasm in the cause of the Revolution, came from the famous publication of Burke; where he attacked, himself entirely alone, the gigantic force of the Assembly, and represented these new legislators, in the midst of all their power and glory, as maniacs, who could only destroy every thing and produce nothing. This work (he continues), beaming with genius and eloquence, though composed at an age when the imagination is on the decline, created two parties in England. Events have but too much justified it, but it remains to be determined, whether the war-cry which it raised against France has not contributed to the violence which has characterized that period. It is possible, that in calling the attention of governments and people of property to the dangers which were connected with this new political religion, Mr. Burke may have been the saviour of Europe; but he mixed up so much exaggeration in his work, and made use of arguments so alarming to the cause of liberty, that he was controverted in many points in a manner not only very plausible, but very forcible. Be that as it may, this publication of Burke, this manifesto against the Assembly, had a prodigious effect in England."

Such are the sentiments of Dumont. I cannot but recommend this great work to your meditation, not as a code of instruction to men of high principles of government, such men were not in his thoughts at the time, but as a code of instruction to all men of popular feelings, who mean well. No sooner had it appeared, but it was replied to by very able men,

and even hooted and ridiculed, such was the violence of that period, by most of the opposite party: a great prejudice against it has in consequence descended to the friends of liberty, even to those who are now in existence. I must counsel you not to give way to any such prejudice, and if your minds are generous and warm, to resort to this great magazine of political wisdom, which may the better enable you, and can alone enable you, to serve your country by combining such wisdom as is here found, with the wisdom that is taught by benevolent feelings and superior talents: such feelings, and such talents, are the great materials that go to the composition of a patriot; but they will be both useless, or worse than useless, if advantage be not taken of such lessons of enlightened thought and matured experience, as are to be found in the Reflections of Mr. Burke.

The work of M. Dumont is addressed to two main subjects: what he observed of the National Assembly, and what he could recollect of Mirabeau. On this latter part of his work I have little to say, because every thing in it is so interesting, so beautiful, and so masterly, that it is impossible you should not read every word of it with the greatest attention; and it is also so very instructive, so obviously instructive, that you can need no hints from me to enable you to benefit by it. The general character of Mirabeau, and his proceedings in the French Revolution, were sufficiently known before the appearance of Dumont's publication; but the description of him that was given, of his personal appearance and influence, his talents, speeches and measures, was so very extraordinary, that it is well to have them so fully confirmed on such unquestionable authority. Never was such an instance of the fascination of great talents. Much too is added, though of the same nature, that is very curious and very valuable. Take as an instance a very remarkable conversation that took place between Dumont and Mirabeau, which may be very edifying to the student if he will consider it as a sort of scene, to show him the difference that always, in truth, exists between a man of genius and a man of sense, when engaging in political affairs, and how indispensably necessary the latter is to the former. Mirabeau brought to Dumont, in confidence, a grand project that he had formed for the preservation of the king,

and the secure establishment of the liberties of the people; and "have you considered," said Dumont, "and do you expect," and "do you suppose," and "are you sure?" Such is the sort of dialogue, and this the kind of interview that passed between the two; and if the student will but meditate on the whole affair, and what was said on both sides, it is seldom that in books he will find any thing so fitted to show him the nature and value of circumspection, forethought, caution, what is on the whole called prudence; the quality, that, little attractive or imposing in itself, happens to be that quality without which every other is vain. The part that you will see Dumont take, is infinitely creditable to his sagacity and judgment, and indeed very creditable to him in every respect.

Lastly. The student will do well to observe also the effects that were produced by Mirabeau's licentiousness and want of reputation. It is difficult to escape from the fascination of genius and talents, but it is necessary. Neither in himself nor others must the student ever for a moment suppose, that any thing can compensate for the absence of the regular virtues of the human character. Dumont, with all his idolatry of Mirabeau, felt this at last, and is obliged to confess it, even in the instance of this wonderful master of the minds of others. To say nothing of the moral part of the case, success, if attained by such a man, which it seldom can be, is after all never perfect; and to others, to his sovereign or a party, he is an instrument or weapon, never valued, never to be trusted, liable at any moment to snap short, and wound the hand that employs it. How useless was Mirabeau to Mounier, and the more virtuous part of the Assembly! With the best intentions for the monarchy, with the most ardent love of liberty, how little did he do for either! How affecting, but how instructive is it, to see him melt into tears, even in the presence of Dumont, and be suffocated with grief, while he lamented that he was so cruelly to expiate the vices of his youth, and that he had lost the empire of France from the want of virtue! Mirabeau then, you perceive, is conscious, that if he had been a man of reputation, France would have been at his feet; yet is he a patriot. And what are to be his sensations, when he has shortly after to die, die prematurely, exhausted by his vices? Does he see in prospect that his country is to be regenerated,

does he see any happiness that yet awaits her? Is he consoled with the success of his own efforts for the public good? Does he look forward to the efforts of others? "My friend," says he, on parting with Dumont, and with an emotion that he had never before shown, "my good friend, I am dying, and we shall probably not see each other again; when I shall be no more, they will then know how to value me. The calamities that I have stayed, will then pour down on France from every quarter; that guilty faction, that trembled before me, will no longer feel restraint. I have before my eyes no visions but those of ill. Oh! my friend, how right we were when we endeavoured at the first to prevent the commons from declaring themselves the National Assembly. It is this that has been the source of all our evils. From the moment they carried that victory, they have never ceased to show themselves unworthy of it; they have chosen to govern the king, instead of governing by the king: but it will soon be the case, that neither they nor he are to govern, and a vile faction will take the lead, and cover France with horrors."

Such may be considered as the dying words of Mirabeau. What a lesson this, on the grander scale of human life, how striking and how complete! I press not upon more awful considerations. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?"

I may say, however, of licentious men like these, that though it be allowed them, which neither in reason nor religion it can be, to have their kingdom only of this world, and though the balance be of their own choosing, still when weighed in it, they are found wanting, their vices ruin their influence, and their kingdom is divided from them.

LECTURE II.

PRELIMINARY LECTURE, 1833.

THE first course of my lectures on the French Revolution was given last year; I am now proceeding to the second and last. But before I do so, I know not how to avoid making a few preliminary observations.

I have been, as I conceive, a friend to civil and religious liberty from the earliest period of my life; but this, on the established principles of the English constitution. This constitution, the more I have read and reflected, the more I have learnt to reverence and love. And I am grieved and mortified, I confess, in the extreme, to observe the various crude and wild theories, the unconstitutional doctrines, and what appear to me the shallow sophistries that are every where floating around us; and it would more than ever grieve and mortify me, if I could conceive, that the youth of this University were, any of them, likely to be influenced by reasonings and views, not worthy to be entertained by the people of England, much less by those who have had the benefit of a regular education.

These mistakes and delusions, for such I deem them, are the noxious exhalations that naturally arise from those states of fermentation into which society is occasionally thrown. I have seen one of these situations of the world already, it was at the opening of the first French Revolution; and I consider myself, as on that account more fitted, than those who have had no such experience, to comprehend such situations; more fitted to understand the value of new opinions, when they are offered to us; more fitted to see the exact bearings of such sentiments of benevolence and patriotism as characterize the speeches and writings of those, who are anxious to make experiments on the condition of their fellow creatures.

New opinions are always very attractive, particularly in any highly civilized state of society, and particularly to the young; that is, to the more effective portion of the public. In the useful and in the fine arts, wherever we turn, and even at last on graver subjects, in legislation and politics, the charm of novelty is deeply felt, and it is quite irresistible to those, who, rising into life, full of ardour, and with the consciousness of talents, are always eager to press forward, and are often enabled, by their superior activity, to shoulder out of the world those they find in it, to give the tone to society, and to influence the fortunes of their country.

This passion for novelty is not without its use to a community in important respects; it gives scope, and offers rewards to the exertions of industry and genius, and is the source of much of the improvement we see in society, and of the advance of civilization: so far it is a blessing to the world. But, when the same rage for novelty enters into the vital subjects I have just alluded to, of legislation and politics, the working of the principle is then of a far different and very doubtful nature, and may not be the blessing of a community, but at particular seasons, the very torment and the curse. The rage for new opinions at the close of the last century, shook the civilized world to its centre, and destroyed France. Any similar passion for change, whenever it can be observed, will always be a subject of suspicion and dread to men of reflection and good sense; and while every applause is given, and every assistance afforded to those who would improve the condition of their countrymen by introducing political changes, it is only upon one condition, which is this: that such men seem careful and provident, and heave the lead often in seas that have now been shown to be of difficult navigation, and where shoals and quicksands abound. Against men like these, it is not to be understood, that I am directing any observations which you may hear in the ensuing lecture. Patriots and reformers have always their difficulties, and may and must hazard something, and allowances must be made for them. What says the most sensible of poets—

> "Truths would you teach, or save a sinking land,
> All fear, none aid you, and few understand."

Still, there is a certain spirit in which men may work, a certain air and manner in which they may march, that cannot well be mistaken by people of any thought and experience. And as you who hear me, though you may have the one, have not exactly the other, I shall proceed to direct your attention to a few of the phenomena that have appeared, and that are every day appearing, and which I think justify me, or rather require me, to leave for a moment the ordinary track of history, and put you on your guard, that your talents and good qualities may not contribute to your deception, and be an injury, instead of a blessing, to your country.

The first description of persons against whom I could wish to guard you, are those whom I shall take the liberty to call the dreamers; those who would banish poverty from the world, and ignorance, and therefore all our vices and our crimes at once, by organizing the world anew. A specimen or two of these deceivers (deceivers perhaps even of themselves) I will allude to. The first that occurs to me is the philosopher of Lanark (Mr. Owen), one of the most active and indomitable of the kind. It is many years since I had the misery of a conversation with him; it lasted nearly two hours; and were I to meet him again to-morrow, the conversation would be just the same, if the courtesy, which at a first meeting I thought his due, could be still maintained. He had hit upon a general theorem, armed with which he defied all comers; and the theorem is no doubt his panoply and shield to this moment. It was this: "that every thing I said was perfectly true, constituted as the world at present was, but could not possibly take place in the state of society which he contemplated." What could be done? It was in vain that I controverted and confuted him, as I supposed, at every turn of the argument; he was still all tranquillity and smiles, and, retired behind his intrenchment, maintained the same happy countenance of triumph and repose; the stream of words with which he had begun still continued to flow on, melliflu-ous and undisturbed. And why should it not, for he was talking of the state of society which he contemplated, and of a world of his own creation; and I had no resource, but vanquished and despairing, as far at least as the noise of the battle was concerned, to leave him in possession of the field;

though in the mean time I was perfectly satisfied, that the state of society which he contemplated, was never intended to take place by the Almighty Master, and would never be found to exist amongst the beings, that in his good providence he had thought proper to create and destine for our particular planet. Is it amusing, or is it melancholy to think, that this man with his parallelograms has been ever since (it must be now twenty years ago) tormenting the earth, year after year, and has still been able to retain his place among the wholesale dealers in the happiness of mankind? Mr. Owen is the wildest of our own dreamers (though we have many, and in every class of society), but another specimen of this sort of new-modelling the world has appeared in the neighbouring country of France, which I may also mention, with all its regular apparatus of lectures and lecturers, followers and audience, treatises published, a name given, and a sect established; I allude to the St. Simonians. I have thought it my duty to spend a week in the perusal of the lectures of these St. Simonians of France. No fatigue could be greater; for I could not but remember, that the world had been already assailed by effusions of this shadowy nature, from the eloquent pen of Rousseau; I could well remember that the world had already suffered from them. The writings of Rousseau contributed most materially to produce the unhappy folly and fatal madness of many of the French revolutionists; and what was now to be witnessed in this instance of the St. Simonians? In the same city and country, of Paris, and of France, beautiful sentences were again to be poured forth; that society, for instance, was to be so adjusted, that every one was to have his place and his rewards according to the measure of his capacity; and all those smoothly flowing streams that had issued from the capacious urn of the philosopher of Geneva, were now again to be diffused over a country that they had already saturated with blood, and left on their departure, heaped with carnage. But the truth is, that mankind have a pleasure in listening to those who describe with eloquence and force, the evils of our imperfect condition; it is a sort of philosophic tragedy, to which, as in a theatre, they delight to repair. It is easy for those who are the playwrights on these occasions, to find a sufficient quantity of truth to mix

up, and render plausible these declamatory exhibitions. The evils of society are more readily seen than the inevitable necessity of them can be understood; and artists of this kind, who often want only a good receipt at the door, can never be without encouragement and an audience. I know not whether it may be the fortune of any of you to meet with any of these lectures of the St. Simonians; though fit for nothing else, they would be perfect models to you for your declamations, where eloquence and elegance of composition are all that are required. There are many publications on this subject in the public library, and Mr. Rose published a treatise on it last January, written with his usual ability.

Human nature, it is said, is always the same; in its elementary principles no doubt it is; and thus it happens, that this system of the St. Simonians appeared in this country, soon after the opening of the French Revolution and when the times first became distempered, from the pen of Mr. Godwin. Considering his work (and I find rightly considering it) as one of a class from which the world could never be clear, I dedicated a lecture to the explication of it. You will shortly hear it, as it is one of the second course on the French Revolution, which I am now going to deliver. The system was regularly overthrown by Mr. Malthus, and it was some time after, in the main, virtually withdrawn by Mr. Godwin himself; yet is it now, it seems, hashed up and accommodated to the Parisian palate; nor need we despair of seeing it presented to us in England by some of the many enterprising performers that figure on our animated scene. Of all these schemes and systems, the drift and promise is the same; to new-model human nature, and banish ignorance from the world and poverty. The benevolent are thus attracted, the sanguine and all the dreamers, sometimes the student, and generally the young. I shall hope, that now and hereafter, like men of sense and real philosophy, you will take care to observe the laws which the Almighty Creator has imposed upon his creatures; the moral state of probation in which we are placed; the process by which human prosperity is to be worked out; and the play, and action, and reaction of those affections, interests, and passions from which our vices and virtues arise, and which must for ever make a part of our

nature; and contenting yourselves with any effort of sympathy and practical exertion in your power, in the cause of human improvement, under all its different and often very lowly appearances, you will expect no miracles in yourselves or others. At all events, never think of stepping in to the assistance of the Almighty, and of new constituting his creatures, giving them new principles of action, that shall turn a metropolis forsooth into a temple of wisdom, and the earth into a paradise.

These airy visions, the products, when not sincere, of a perverted and unprincipled ingenuity, when sincere, of a querulous and morbid temperament, might be safely left to pass away like the bubbles of a disturbed stream, if it were not; that they familiarize men to vague and unsubstantial reasonings, to sweeping and contemptuous estimates of society, and particularly of the institutions of their country, in a word prepare them for revolutions; and if it were not also, that they descend into the minds of the lower orders and working classes, particularly in manufacturing districts, and quite derange the common machinery of society, and even threaten the national prosperity.

But our speculative statesmen and political philosophers do not always confine themselves to such unearthly reveries as I have been describing; they do not always hover in the clouds, they descend among us, and propose measures that are certainly of a very practicable nature, and that can certainly be carried into execution, if the people of this country should be sufficiently forgetful of the past and careless of the future. Our church, for instance, is to be dealt with, and our aristocracy; and that after no ceremonious or measured manner, but in a way totally alien to the spirit and meaning of our constitution; in a way perfectly revolutionary.

I do not choose, as I have already said, to mix myself in the politics of the day. I have never done so. I never mean it; but I shall certainly take this opportunity, on account of these modern notions and revolutionary schemes, to call you with more earnestness than ever to the study of history, and even take upon myself to request you will give your attention to the lectures I am now about to deliver. That you will observe the facts of this French Revolution, the principles, the charac-

ters, the events; that you will turn the history to some account, for the preservation of yourselves and of your country, and not be led astray, as were not only the thoughtless and the inexperienced, but the grave and the good, in that great kingdom close to our own shores, and at a period immediately touching upon our own. What then is the great lesson of the whole of that Revolution? To avoid Revolutions. First, to reform in time; secondly, to build upon old foundations; never to lose sight of, never to quit your hold of the institutions of your country. But old foundations! institutions of the country! What then is to become of the march of the human mind, of the progress of science, of legislation, of civil and religious liberty, the happiness of the people, the rights of mankind; what is to become of these important interests, and what of human nature? Such is the language that you will now hear, such the sentiments of the more current publications of the day, such the questions you will yourselves be many of you disposed to ask. The answer is, that such important interests will be all better served, and can only be served in the humble manner proposed,—by building upon old foundations, by never losing hold of existing institutions; that any other course is an experiment of probable confusion, anarchy, and blood; that such an experiment is not necessary, and after the experience of the French Revolution, unpardonable. But is all this denied? Is it doubted? If it be, look at this history of the French Revolution. Even listen for a moment to the rapid notices of it that are now in these lectures to be offered to you. Do you suppose that there were no men of talents originally and long engaged in these scenes; that there were no men of benevolence, of patriotism, of virtue, and of honour; that courage was wanting, or that genius, or men of literary accomplishments, or men that did not suppose, at least, that they had meditated the past, and could provide for the future? Were there no aspirations, do you imagine, for the future happiness of mankind; no talk of their destinies, the march of the human mind, the rights of men, the cause of liberalism, of civil and religious liberty, all over the world? Assuredly you will hear enough of these great interests and sacred sounds (for sacred they are and ever must be to our common nature), you will hear enough of these affecting appeals to the under-

standing and to the heart; and you will see an ample supply of orators and statesmen qualified to enforce such appeals, and to work out, as might have been imagined, the happiness of their country. But suppose you, that you will not see any thing of an opposite description;—the vices as well as the virtues of our nature; and orators and statesmen fitted only to destroy the happiness of their country? Do you suppose that such men will not always be found starting up in critical times? Do you suppose that you will not see literary men puffed up with vanity, upstarts intoxicated with the new possession of power, and speculatists and projectors blown up into rashness and absurdity, by enthusiasm and self conceit; good men led away and bewildered, and made the tools of the designing, amid the hopes and visions of their benevolence; daring and bad men hurrying on the more peaceful and reflecting into measures of violence and guilt, ready to sacrifice every thing to their ambition, or even to the success of a political theory; leaders of mobs and the orators of clubs elevated into statesmen, and ruling the destinies of their country, plunging on from one violence to another, and finding their only protection in still accumulating crimes of tyranny and bloodshed? And suppose you, that such men and such atrocities can ever be avoided, if patriots and reformers presume to break up the opinions and cast away the institutions of their country? If any men can so suppose, if any notions of this nature are indeed indulged by those, who, because they mean well, seem ready to hope from themselves and others, whatever they please, and treat the passions and interests of their countrymen as cards, that they may shuffle and deal as they fancy the game; if there be any such men, let them consider well this French Revolution; the different events, as I have already said, that took place; the different characters that appeared; the appropriate faults of different descriptions of men; the total impossibility, that mistakes, and faults, and crimes, should be avoided, on all unhappy occasions, that once assume the nature of revolutions; and surely it may be hoped, that some little check will be imposed upon the hardiness of the bold, some wisdom introduced into the apprehensions of the perverse, some modesty into the minds of the conceited, something like sense, and sobriety, and reflection,

and humanity, and justice, and patriotism, and philosophy, in the proper meaning of these words, into the feelings and understandings of all. I must really again assume a little more than, I hope, it is my nature to do, and I must declare to you, that even in the lectures I am now going to deliver, and those I have delivered on this French Revolution, imperfect as they may be, and a mere sketch and a series of hints and observations, rather than any proper account of these memorable scenes, still I must declare to you, that you will hear enough to edify you, and you will see pass in a sort of review before you, characters striking enough in every way of talents, of virtues, of faults, and of crimes, to afford you ample lessons of instruction, if you will make the best of such notices as can here alone be given you. In the former course of lectures you had the faults of the privileged orders exhibited to you; in these you are now to hear the faults of revolutionists. In the former lectures, the gradual progress and plausible nature of new opinions; in the present, the excesses to which they are but too naturally carried. In the former you had to witness the church offending, and more particularly the nobility, and as no remedy was thought of but their degradation, you will see in the present the consequences. You will see in the former one great National Assembly formed, and you will observe in the present what must ever be experienced from any such political mistake, that no tyrant is so unprincipled and cruel as is a single assembly. You will perceive an attempt made by La Fayette and the Constitutionalists to make a free monarchy, without clergy or nobility; to leave a king in a free monarchy to depend on the love and good opinion of his people. You will now have to note well the result of so idle an effort; the folly of making the executive power weak and inefficient, the unreasonableness of this eternal jealousy of all executive authority. Republican forms of government have been much admired; they have their merits; but you will see in the present course of lectures, an ample exhibition of the evils to which such forms are exposed, more particularly when the times become difficult, that is, when government is most wanted. Of such characters as naturally appear in seasons of a revolutionary nature, the benevolent, and the sanguine, and the young, you will now have placed before you several

instances, to show the ruin they must generally bring upon their country; and not only this, but the misery, the disappointment, and in many cases the destruction they will occasion to themselves.

From the first and during the earliest sittings of the Constituent Assembly, you will have to remark, how loose were the notions of its members on the subject of property. From general and abstract reasonings, such as human ingenuity can never be at a loss to produce in favour of any political measure that may be convenient, they proceeded at last to dispose of property (that of the church for instance) exactly as suited their views; and you will, I hope, observe in the lectures I am going to deliver, how their philosophy was improved upon, until all property and life itself became the tenure of an hour, at the mercy of demagogues, who had no respect for either. In the Constituent Assembly you will hear of no rights but those of the people, no sounds but those of their sovereignty; that their will was not only law but wisdom, and whatever a statesman could desire as a sanction for his votes and measures; their happiness was all that was to be accomplished, and of that they were the best and only judges. You will see the consequences of such abused and perverted theories; you will see what are the consequences, when those who should counsel for a nation listen to no counsels but those which come from the people themselves, or rather from those who, on various accounts, take a prominent part in their concerns. You will from the first be called upon to observe, how fatal are the consequences, when those who are not the members of a Legislative Assembly, express their opinion from the galleries on what is passing beneath. And finally, and above all, you will learn what follows from the existence of clubs and associations, regularly meeting, discussing, and determining upon whatever they may think affects the public weal, organizing the kingdom into similar assemblies, and constituting themselves in fact the nation, to whose wisdom, and certainly to whose physical strength all other wisdom and strength were to be submitted. All these things you will have presented to your observation, and they are the lessons, the recent lessons of history; and it is to me only a matter of astonishment, that there can be any man, professing to be

either a philosopher or a statesman, on whom they have not the most decided effect, in moderating his expectations, in teaching him the treachery of popular feelings, the necessary contrariety of human opinions, the incurable fury of men in maintaining their particular notions; how easy is the descent to confusion, how valuable is every form and principle and institution, that can at all be fitted, and that has hitherto been able, to maintain peace and order in any collection of human beings—human beings, such as they are, and ever must be found, with all the passions and necessities of their nature raging about them, urging them to deeds of selfishness and violence, to disregard authority and law and the rights of property, and trample down the unoffending and the weak.

But to recur to the subjects I have already mentioned.

Our church, as I have said, is to be dealt with, and our aristocracy, and that, after no ceremonious or measured manner, but in a way totally alien to the spirit and meaning of our constitution—in a way perfectly revolutionary.

Now it is not for me to step out of my province and to speak upon the subject of the church, but as a reader of history, and a lecturer on history, I will leave a few observations with you, which, I hope, when you are in the world, and listening to the sweeping and irreverent observations that you may hear in it, you will not entirely forget. I must then, in the first place, remark, that whenever the times become critical, the clergy are the first to be attacked; when revolutionary altars are dressed, they are the first victims; they are naturally the representatives of peace and order; their habits, their studies, indispose them to innovation and experiment; they are necessarily in the way of those who are desirous of change, still more of those who are ready to risk confusion; and being men whose profession it is, by their expostulations, example, and interference, to disseminate piety and check licentiousness, they are naturally disagreeable, troublesome, and hateful to those, who are the leaders in civil commotions. Among such men, particularly among the most daring, and therefore the most effective of them, there are always found those who are at least little interested about the doctrines of religion, valuing at no high price either its influence or its ministers. The possessions, too, of the church are an insulated

species of property, very tempting to revolutionists and those who want it for political purposes. Men of the ecclesiastical order are themselves, also, an insulated description of men, neither from their numbers nor their characters qualified to defend themselves. On all these accounts they are the first to be vituperated and insulted, assaulted and plundered by revolutionists who mean ill, and by revolutionists who know not what they mean. And as these things are the preludes to civil calamities, and the ordinary prognostics and harbingers of all sorts of atrocities, men of this sacred character are the first whose rights the thoughtful and the good will set themselves to defend and whose political consequence they will endeavour to uphold; the first whom they will step forward to support on every principle, not only of justice, generosity, and humanity, but even on the principle of common security.

Such, I must remark, will be the first impulses that will be felt by wise and good men, with respect to the existing members of any ecclesiastical establishment. How far such an establishment may be benefited by any future regulations is another question. Still the benefit of the establishment will be the great point to be regarded.

For in the same quality of a reader of history I must in the second place observe, that we are not to expect to find in an establishment men of theological learning, if the establishment be poor; that an establishment is the best expedient for the religious education of the community, for the sober administration of Christianity, the explanation of its doctrines, and the exhibition of its hopes and terrors; that while an establishment is secured, toleration may be freely granted to dissentients; and again, all the various descriptions of enthusiasts and fanatics, that are always more or less found in society, may be thus rendered comparatively harmless;—a most important consideration, for all history proclaims such men to be the great enemies of the peace, the safety, and the improvement of every community, where they obtain any material influence.

But as I have already observed, not only is our church but our aristocracy to be dealt with. It is always thus. It may be very true, that those who now vilify and threaten either the

one or the other, are in no great number or estimation among us; still what we here see exhibited before us, is all after the manner of the pictures of history. Immediately after the clergy the aristocracy are always attacked, their usefulness questioned, their privileges thought inconsistent with the rights of the people; their artificial rank deemed unworthy of the dignity of our common nature, mocked at, and despised; and finally in their persons they are hunted down, exiled, or destroyed. So was it in France. The first cry was, "The bishops to the Lanterne;" next, "The aristocrats." So will it be ever, where the form of government is mixed, and the clergy and aristocracy are had in honour with their appropriate places of distinction among the forms of the constitution. Of late years, there has been an unceasing persecution, an unwearied effort to write down our aristocracy. Nothing can be more unreasonable. In our free monarchy, it is the cement of the whole system; it prevents the king from being the slave of the people, it prevents the people from openly or tacitly overpowering their king; it secures the one, it checks and liberalizes the other; it refines society from the throne down to the lowest cottage. What then is the true reason why it is so persecuted by men of letters and ultra reformers? The reason is, that an aristocracy is in the way of men of literary talents and philosophic acquirements; it offers to mankind other objects of affection and respect; it prevents such men from rising to the eminence they think their due—from being, if they should choose, the rulers of the kingdom; it stands directly opposed to the establishment of a republic, naturally the great object to those who depend on their intellectual talents; and again, to those who are men of ambition.

And now before I offer a word more on the subject of our aristocracy, I must beg not to be misunderstood. I must beg to remind you what my general doctrine has been all through these lectures. It has always been, that as it is with individuals, so in the case of large bodies of men, different orders have their appropriate temptations, and that a lecturer must at all times be not a little employed, in exhibiting, for the instruction of those who hear him, the particular mistakes and faults of each in their turn. Never was such a specimen of the truth of a remark of this kind, as was exhibited to the

world by the French Revolution:—first, the faults of the court and privileged orders; next, the faults of patriots and popular leaders. And though in this instance the faults of each were carried to a totally unparalleled excess, I am quite aware, and it is my general position, that these different descriptions of men can never be entirely free, not only from a tendency to commit their appropriate faults, but from the actual commission of them. And in all these cases, it is the magnitude and the particular danger at the time of these characteristic faults that is to be considered, rather than the existence of them. I shall, in the remainder of this lecture, make a few remarks on the unconstitutional and even vulgar notions that I observe circulating around us on the subject of our aristocracy, but I do not mean to represent this order of men or any order of men, as out of the reach of very just and grave censure; and I must take this opportunity of warning all of you, who are likely hereafter to be men of consideration in the country, that you are not to give way to the temptations that beset you, that you are not to commit the faults which naturally belong to you, that you are not to look down upon your fellow creatures as beings of a different description, that you of all others are to have the spirit of the Christian benevolence warm at your hearts, that you are never to be indifferent to the expenditure of the public money, that you are not to think it a matter of course to provide for your relatives and dependents by pensions and places, and to use a common phrase, by quartering them on the public. These things are not creditable to our aristocracy, and are on every account most injurious to the state, sometimes even dangerous. The constitution expects you to be, and you must not fail to be, high-minded, and honourable, and independent, and according to your measure accomplished and intelligent. By the laws and institutions of your country,—primogeniture—the peerage,—you are set upon a hill, and you must endeavour to be objects worthy to be looked up to by the community. Above all, and which is perhaps the hardest task of all, you are not to be systematically averse to all proposals of alteration, that may approach you under the name of improvement or reform. The constitution certainly supposes, that you are not to be carried away by every wind of doctrine, and that

your step is to be distinguished from the precipitate march of the vulgar; it places the highest description of you in a distinct house, and gives you privileges precisely for that purpose, to ensure deliberation and a pause; but you are to remember, all of you, the constitutional history of your country; which history may be almost summed up in the single observation, that it is the opening, and unloosing, and accommodating the feudal system to the growing interests and happiness of the community. Those interests and that happiness, as I shall endeavour to show, are now inextricably and vitally interwoven with the permanence of our aristocracy, but with its respectability also; and I admit, that this respectability must be kept high; that it is of a moral nature, and must, therefore, as in every other instance of human virtue, be exposed to the criticism of those around.

Having premised thus much, I shall think myself at liberty totally to protest against the shallow, or malignant, or republican doctrines and notions which I observe in the various publications, journals, speeches, and pamphlets of the day, tending to the disparagement and destruction of our aristocracy. It will be said, that these doctrines and notions are of no real consequence; that they are the tax we must pay for a free press and the existence of freedom among us; that the people of England are too sensible, and the people of property too numerous, to admit of our supposing that the nation will be affected by exaggerated statements, unjustifiable invectives, and crude and presumptuous theories. I should be sorry not to believe this of the people of England. As yet I certainly do believe it, and trust I shall always have occasion to believe it. But this place is a place of education, one, where theories and opinions of every kind are naturally the subjects of discussion; and I think it my duty to endeavour to save you from every thing that is unreasonable, from every thing that is unworthy of you, as men of education and thought. Whether such doctrines and theories may be likely now or hereafter so to circulate as to become dangerous to the state, that particular point it may not be exactly within my competence to decide: a free country is never secure from moral and political epidemics of the most unaccountable nature. But what I have to insist upon is, that these doctrines and

theories are unreasonable; are contrary to the spirit and nature of our constitution; that it would be very discreditable in my opinion, both to your University and yourselves, for you to entertain them; and this must be for me a sufficient reason for endeavouring to prepare your minds against their influence.—And in the first place I must observe, that it is with no small earnestness that we are called upon "to detach respectability from acres and rent rolls:" we are assured, "that property is no legal heir to respect." Such are the phrases used. Far be it from me to be indifferent to the claims of genius and knowledge; but the truth is, that property, on the contrary, really is, the legal heir to respect. In a highly civilized, commercial, manufacturing country like this, and one that has been long so, in an old country like this, politically speaking, it must be so. We are not to exclude from our House of Commons or official situations, those who are not men of property, but we have a better chance to find in such men, in men of property, the regular and valuable virtues of the human character; certainly those qualities that are most fitted for legislation, and most necessary to the welfare of a community. The men of literature and genius may seldom come within the description of men of property; but when such men leave their proper province of entertaining and instructing mankind, become ambitious, enter deeply in any force and number into the politics of a country, and undertake at all to rule it, no greater calamity can be let loose upon a country; no men can be conceived so likely to mislead, bewilder, disorganize, and dissolve it. I speak not from theory, though the theory is easy, but now, as all through this lecture, I refer to the facts of history and the facts of the French Revolution.

But to proceed to such arguments as are advanced against our aristocracy, and such as are likely to acquire popularity. In the first place, our aristocracy is represented "as having had the exclusive possession of the power of the kingdom; as having been an oligarchy; closely united and exercising a monopoly; that the king has been always a cipher, and the people little more." Nothing can be further from the truth: the aristocracy of this country has been always divided, and never acted in the concentrated manner supposed. That part

of it, called the Whig aristocracy, made the Revolution of 1688, and on that account have an eternal claim to the gratitude both of the people and the family on the throne; they supported that family on the throne against the Tory part of the aristocracy and the Jacobites; they resisted the American war; a respectable division of them resisted the French revolutionary war; they were always the advocates for the emancipation of the Roman Catholics. Whether the Whig party were right or wrong on these occasions is not now the point. I am only contending, that the aristocracy of this country has been always divided; and that of the whole aristocracy, that part alone has from time to time prevailed, which has been assisted by the favour of the sovereign and of the community. So totally untrue is it, that the king has been always a cipher in the hands of the aristocracy, and the people little more.

But of this very unreasonable position, of the exclusive and monopolizing power of the aristocracy, there is even a sort of demonstration attempted, and I shall read it to you at full length, premising at the same time, that this, which the author thinks an indictment of the aristocracy, is in every word their defence and recommendation; in every word an explanation of their value to our system. The author is endeavouring to show the ambitious and monopolizing nature of our aristocracy (I select him as one of a class), and he observes—I shall now for some time quote his words—he observes then, "that the social influence of the aristocracy has been exactly of a kind to strengthen their legislative: instead of keeping themselves aloof from the other classes, and 'hedging their state' round with the thorny but unsubstantial barriers of heraldic distinctions; instead of demanding half a hundred quarterings with their wives, and galling their inferiors by eternally dwelling on their inferiority, they may be said to mix more largely, and with more seeming equality with all classes, than any other aristocracy in the savage or civilized world.

"Drawing their revenues from land, they have also drawn much of their more legitimate power from the influence it gave them in elections. To increase this influence, they have been in the habit of visiting the provinces much more often than any aristocracy in a monarchical state are accustomed to do. Their hospitality, their field sports, the agricultural and county

meetings they attend, in order to keep up the family interest, mix them with all classes, and possessing the usual urbanity of a court, they have not unfrequently added to the weight of property and the glitter of station, the influence of a personal popularity, acquired less, perhaps, by the evidence of virtues than the exercise of politeness. In most other countries, the middle classes rarely possessing the riches of the nobility, offer to the latter no incentive for seeking their alliance. But wealth is the greatest of all levellers; and the highest of the English nobles willingly repair the fortunes of hereditary extravagance by intermarriage with the families of the banker, the lawyer, and the merchant. This, be it observed, tends to extend the roots of their influence among the middle classes, who, in other countries, are the natural barrier of the aristocracy. It is the ambition of the rich trader to obtain the alliance of nobles; and he loves as well as respects those honours to which himself or his children may aspire. The long established custom of purchasing titles, either by hard money or the more circuitous influence of boroughs, has tended also to mix aristocratic feelings with the views of the trader; and the apparent openness of honours to all men, makes even the humble shopkeeper grown rich, think of sending his son to college, not that he may become a wiser man, or a better man, but that he may, perhaps, become my 'Lord Bishop,' or my 'Lord Chancellor.'"—Such is this indictment, and preferred as such.

Now really I must be permitted to ask, what is there in all this to be objected to? We are not a republic; we are a mixed monarchy, and our system is thus harmonized and rounded off in every part; we are a free monarchy, and the king and people are kept from secret jealousy and open hostility by an intermediate body, whose influence is every where, it seems, diffused like the air, but, I must contend, like the air, for the health and benefit of all; attached to the people and identified with them by common feelings of property, connexions, and interests, and bound to the king by common feelings and political interests of hereditary dignity and power. But lastly, we are not only a mixed and free monarchy, but we are a great commercial, manufacturing nation, and other notions are thus happily introduced among us, besides those of mere traffic

and gain; we have among us not only learning and the arts, but we have refinement of manners, and delicacy of taste, and elevation of sentiment; and our talk is not entirely about dollars. Is an aristocracy like this to be assimilated with any other aristocracy that ever existed in the world? Could it be created by any speculator or constitution-monger, be he who he may? Is such an aristocracy to be lightly prized, so formed to discharge the most healing and useful offices to the community? Is it to be cast aside because it may have its opinions, or may make its mistakes, or even display the faults that may be supposed naturally to belong to it? What philosophy is this, or what spirit of liberalism, that can distinguish not between the permanent value of a body, and its occasional prejudices and errors; between the overpowering advantages and minor disadvantages of an institution?

But again. We are now to see revived the dreams and declamation of Lord Bolingbroke.

Lord Bolingbroke was an agitator, and a Jacobite, and he wished to drive the Brunswick family from the throne, and Sir Robert Walpole from the helm. In his Dissertation on Parties, and his Patriot King, may be found sentences in unwearied succession, after the manner of the lectures of the St. Simonians, that flow, and as they flow, for ever might flow on, elegant in point of composition, airy and unembarrassed, and never startling the reader by any prominent absurdity, though producing no conviction at the last. Parties were to cease, according to these very innocent reasonings, and the king was to be rewarded for his patriotism and virtues by the love and admiration of his subjects, upon which, moreover, he was to depend. Whether Lord Bolingbroke was himself a convert to the sounds of his own tinkling cymbal, may, perhaps, be doubted; he was a man of great ability and conversant with the world, in the business of which he had deeply engaged. He could set up no cry but that of corruption against Sir Robert Walpole, who was maintaining the Brunswick princes on the throne by the influence of government and family connexions, and these, it is to be observed, with something of the corruption imputed to the minister, were all, but just sufficient for the purpose, against the arts of men like Lord Bolingbroke, and the Tory country gentlemen

of England, who were then Jacobites. All this is very intelligible in Lord Bolingbroke, and Shippen, and Sir William Windham, who might declaim about civil liberty, and cant about the rights of the people, while they were endeavouring to restore a family that would have put an end to both; but it is a little too fatiguing to have these sophistries reproduced and presented once more to the English people, as the conclusions of genuine patriotism and constitutional wisdom.

"What interest," it is said by our modern Lord Bolingbrokes, "has a monarch in the perpetuation of abuses? He, unlike the aristocracy, has nothing to lose by concession to the popular advantage: a king has nothing to gain by impoverishing his people, but every lord has a mortgage to pay off, or a younger son to provide for; and it is for the aristocracy, not the king, that corruption is a lucrative system: a king stands aloof and apart from the feuds, and jealousies, the sordid avarice, the place-hunting ambition, which belong to those only a little above the people. The aristocracy (it is continued) has been no less his enemy than ours; they have crippled his power, while they have encroached on our revenues. Observe, it is said, how natural a generous loyalty is to you, and how selfishness distorts the loyalty of an aristocracy." Such is the strain in which our present Lord Bolingbrokes proceed. I trust the English people will never attempt to show their "generous loyalty" to their king by robbing him of his aristocracy; they will never, I hope, set up their king to maintain his authority, armed only with his prerogative, a prerogative in its exercise often of the most invidious and perilous nature; they will never, I hope, require him to be dependent only on their particular favour at the moment, and to maintain his crown by his popularity, that is, by leaving no power to exist but that of the people themselves. And I trust that they will never be such unreasonable critics of their aristocracy, as to expect that the vices of our common nature shall not be found amongst them, or that the very constitution of such a body does not suppose certain modes of thinking to belong to it, which occasionally may appear to militate with the interests of the public, though in the main they are necessary to the security, and strictly form an essential part of our mixed monarchical system. I reason not with

those who prefer a republic; be this predilection avowed, and the reasonings of these gentlemen are consistent. Strip a king of his aristocracy and we have a republic in an instant: if he live, he is a phantom, but he will probably not live long.

But again, it is said, "Is a powerful aristocracy necessary to the safety of the throne? Look round the world, and see. Are not those monarchies the most powerful and the most settled, in which the influence of the aristocracy is least strong, in which the people and the king form one state, and the aristocracy are the ornaments of the fabric, not the foundations? Look at Prussia." Prussia and the monarchies of the world!! Have we never heard of the standing armies of Prussia, and the monarchies of the world? Do these kings, because they and their people form one state, ever think of disbanding their armies? And is it of an absolute monarchy that we are speaking, or of England—a mixed and free monarchy, with a House of Commons that can refuse the supplies, and ten thousand writers that scatter their publications every day and every week all over the kingdom, and who depend for their daily bread, many of them, upon agitation, all of them upon excitement, and finding something amiss?

I say nothing against the House of Commons or the press; I know the indispensable value of both. But let us not be reasoned with as if we were like Prussia and the monarchies of the world.

But again. "So far," it is said, "from a king deriving strength from an aristocracy, it is the vices of an aristocracy, and not of a monarchy, that usually destroy a kingdom; had the French aristocracy been less strong, and less odious, Louis XVI. would not have fallen a victim." And is it really then pretended that the aristocracy of England now, and since the Revolution of 1688, can be brought into comparison with the aristocracy of France during the times of the Regent and Louis XV.?

This reference to France is unfortunate. If there be any one mistake more obvious than another in the French Revolution, it is the mistake of the patriots in making the executive power too weak, and in leaving their king to depend upon the love of his subjects; the "démocratie royale" was the phrase. It is to be hoped we shall never see a "démocratie royale"

attempted in England: yet what but a "démocratie royale" would be our monarchy without its aristocracy? But a higher tone is often assumed by our popular writers. "We want no aristocracy," it is said, "as a check to the prerogative of the king:" "we can take care of ourselves;" this is a very favourite phrase. Now by the word "we" must be here meant the people; and this is a republic. When the people, as distinguished from the aristocracy, are to take care of themselves, it can only be by organized bodies, like the clubs of France, which must continually turn the government into a republic, and a republic of the very worst possible description. "But since it seems," says a distinguished writer, "that our jealousy must be directed mainly against the aristocratic power, how shall we proceed in order to resist and diminish it?" This, it is said, is a question not easily answered. I, your lecturer, am very glad to hear this upon such good authority; this seems to me like very good news for England. "What then," it is afterwards observed, "is to be done? The House of Lords is not to be swamped and rendered popular, because that would strengthen a Whig ministry; and that is not the best mode of weakening an aristocratic domination. But a second mode of dealing with the House of Lords has, it seems, occurred to some bolder speculators; they propose 'not to swamp it, but to wash it away altogether.' Certainly such a thing, it may be replied, has been done in the history of our country, and the execution of the king on a scaffold had taken place a few days before: we have a precedent, no doubt; we have had the House of Lords declared useless. But on the whole this scheme, it seems, is not approved of. And why? Any thought of Charles I. and his scaffold? Not at all. But because the Lords would take their seats in the House of Commons, and are people of such property that you would then have no popular assembly at all." This is again very comfortable news; that the property of the nobility is too great to be managed even by a revolutionary process, like that of France, destroying their titles and legislative distinctions, and leaving the country at the mercy of one assembly. Neither of these modes, then, of treating the Lords will be found, it is said, to our advantage. "A third mode might be devised, but I think (continues the writer) we are not yet

prepared for it." This is once more very pleasing intelligence, and without knowing exactly what it is, I shall venture to hope, that we never shall be prepared. But what does this third mode turn out to be? It is this: "the creation of an elective not an hereditary senate, which might be an aristocracy in the true sense of the word; that is, an assembly of the best men; the selected of the country; selected from the honest as well as the rich, the intelligent as well as the ignorant; in which property would cease to be the necessary title, and virtue and knowledge might advance claims equally allowed." And this then is to be the result of all these superior reasonings on the nature of an aristocracy; this the happy consummation at which we are to arrive. We are no longer to have an hereditary House of Lords; and what then is on the whole our case, when such is our prescription? We are to be renowned among the nations of Europe for a long succession of ages; we are to be an ancient monarchy, now for almost a thousand years, and we are to derive no advantage from all this long ancestry of fame. We are to have no longer any assembly of *hereditary* peers, no longer any objects of respect, no longer a house of legislature *prepared* for us; none, inveterate and established in our usages and associations; but we are to go from time to time into our cities and highways, and to find an upper house among such men as we can pick up, the best we can meet, as if we were a republic of yesterday, or as if we were some upstart collection of men, that had just arisen from some sudden insurrection or successful rebellion. We are to have our knights and our barons, for centuries, the first in every field of honourable danger, when the chivalry of Europe was in arms; we are to have them led to conquest by our Edwards and Henries, we are to see them win by their sword the very charters of the liberties we now enjoy, and we are then to see the descendants of these men obliterated from their house of legislature. We are to see our time-honoured land robbed of all that has entitled it to the honours of time, stripped of its armorial bearings, its escutcheon, and its supporters; and these things are not to be done by a foreign conqueror, meaning to assassinate the country, but we are even to deface and destroy with our own unnatural hands the very heraldic distinctions that have been worn and

emblazoned in the eyes of the world, age after age, since the civilization of Europe first began. We have had our witenagemotes, our parliaments, and the immediate successor of these, our House of Lords, an assembly rich in historic names, and we are to cast it away, as if such an inheritance were not one of the dearest treasures that a nation could possess; as if such an assembly were not the standing record of our past wisdom, our valour, and our renown; as if there were not here to be seen, men, many of them, bearing on their front the very superscription of our sages, our statesmen, our patriots, and our heroes. Does an Englishman, when he sees the descendants, many of them of the Norman barons, when he sees the Beauforts, the Howards, the Percies, the Stanleys, the Shrewsburys, the Nevilles, the Cecils, the Wentworths, the Russells and the Cavendishes, the Fortescues and the Hardwickes, the Marlboroughs and the Wellingtons, the Nelsons and the Howes, those who thus embody before his eyes the story of England, does he not identify himself with the grandeur of his country? Does he walk into the House of Lords, and is there no genius of the place? The great orator of England, in the fervour of his eloquence, once pointed to the tapestry of the House of Lords, and told one of the Howards that his ancestor from that tapestry was frowning upon him, as a degenerate descendant. And are these Howards then to be dismissed; and this tapestry, the glorious, though perhaps rude record of the triumph of our brave island over all the power of Spain, is this tapestry to be torn away, and the representatives of Lord Chatham to appear no more, and the house to be cleared away from such barbarous relics of our feudal ancestors, and to be neatly whitewashed and prepared, after some modern manner, for the reception of I know not whom—men, not the representatives of the rank and renown of our country, most assuredly, but voted to be, and perhaps very idly, the representatives of its wisdom and its worth? What did Cromwell find at last wanting to the consummation of his power—conqueror of his country, her constitution, and his king? A House of Lords. One recreant wretch alone could defile his robes, by entering his dishonoured chamber. What did the conqueror of Europe, the conqueror of all, but of this island and her aristocracy (whom he did not find a nation of

shopkeepers, however they might honour, and justly honour, the pursuits of commerce), what did Buonaparte, in like manner, find at last wanting to give dignity to his power and security to his throne? An aristocracy, a nobility, a house of peers. What could he alone attempt, and was he not known to have sighed in bitterness that he could attempt no more? He surrounded himself with his marshals; these indeed he made the princes of Europe, but he could not make them the peers of France. But is it the wearers of the crown, and is it our ancient monarchy alone, that are dignified and supported by our House of Lords? Far from it. Is there, on the contrary, any part of our system that is not vivified and rendered fitter for its purposes by our institution of nobility? Does the law student labour with less patience at his year books and his parchments, because he may transmit a coronet to his descendants? Does the young scholar accomplish himself the less, with the learning that shall explain and defend his religion, because he sees his profession had in honour, and that he may be associated with the peers of the realm? Does the soldier follow with less spirit because he is now, as he has always been, led on by the gentlemen and nobles of the land? Does the sailor face his dangers, brave the elements, and stand the battle with less steadiness and strength, because a peer commands his fleet, because a man of birth and family, because a nobleman, or the younger son of a nobleman paces with him on the deck above, or is a partner of his mess below, struggles in the same storm, and bleeds in the same cause? What were the words that were uttered by the great genius of our naval service, the Nelson whom Buonaparte so admired, as well he might; "Now for it," he cried, as he was rushing into the fight; "a coronet or Westminster Abbey." And are these things to be lightly prized—and that by a great nation, not entirely an aristocratic nation, but to a considerable extent, a commercial and manufacturing nation; are they to be supposed of little consequence to our system of government, of no importance to any assemblage of human beings, made up, as we are, of a thousand principles and passions, which are eternally running into excesses and mistakes, and which, when once found to flow in channels, that dispense health and fertility to the land, are never to be turned aside or disturbed?

Are all those associations that give heart and courage, and a sense of dignity and independence, and honour, and long transmitted glory to a country, what no legislature on earth can at pleasure create, and no riches on earth can purchase, are these all to be swept away that an assembly may arise, "in which property would cease to be the necessary title, and virtue and knowledge might advance claims equally allowed —an assembly of the best men, the selected of the country, selected from the poorest as the rich, the intelligent as the ignorant?" Selected! and selected by whom? It is indeed astonishing, but it is a specimen of the times, and as such, I produce it to be a lesson and a warning to you; it is indeed astonishing, that any man can be found, yet such there are, who can for a moment entertain so unworthy a conception of what his country stood in need of, of what a statesman of England should propose, of what an Englishman should condescend to honour, with a moment of his thoughts, tearing from his memory and respect whatever he ought to find indissolubly connected with every emotion of his heart, and every feeling of his patriotism, and even his own personal pride: but such is the miserable consequence of letting a spirit of speculation loose, unchecked by any affection, unawed by any reverence for the past, sacrificing every thing to some political irritation or inconvenience of the hour, and destroying their country, because their country, they think, is impeded in what they suppose the march of liberalism, or as they would presume to say, of happiness and honour.

We speak of republics. I do not believe any intelligent republican from America would thus deal, as it is called, with our House of Lords. I remember showing this University to a gentleman from that country. Of course I did not omit the hall of Trinity College, nor forget the beautiful observation of Sir James Mackintosh, "that this was indeed a renowned University, where such men as Lord Coke, and Barrow, and Dryden were only second-rate men, and where one college could boast the still more illustrious names of Bacon and Newton, and another the name of Milton. "True indeed, sir," said my visitor, and while he spoke, I saw a shade of melancholy visibly pass athwart his countenance; "true in-

deed, sir; and this is what in our country, do what we will, we never, never can attain."

I know not how to comprehend the feelings of those who are unmoved by the common associations of our nature, and who speak and legislate, as if men were beings of reason alone; as if they were influenced only by the dictates of the understanding; and as if the Almighty Master had not called in, to the aid of the understanding, many other and even more powerful instincts and principles, when he provided for the interests of the individual, and secured the working of the machinery of human society.

On what possible grounds do men make light of prescription, and custom, and usage? In the practical affairs of the world they are all in all. Men, it is said, institute society from a sense of common interest and the necessity of mutual protection. This has seldom or never been the fact. But be it so. What wise man would afterwards deprive them of those long established habits of thought and feeling which render them contented to remain in it? who would deprive them of the influence of their imagination, to be added to that of their reason? Who would deprive a nation of a sort of visible immortality in its institutions, be they what they may, if found to be sufficient to the great purposes of life? Who would take from men a sort of confidence in the peace and order of their community; who would rob them of a constant sense and belief, that they may depend on the future in the disposal of their children, in the exercise of their own industry, in the prospects of themselves and of those who are to come after them? How is patriotism to be generated or to exist, if there is nothing fixed and visible to love and to respect; if every thing is to be transitory, fluctuating, and uncertain, abandoned to the mercy of the shifting conclusions and speculations of those who reason? "But a new world, it seems, has arisen. Perfectly right," it is said, "were the statesmen of old in their scoffs and declamation against the people: the people were then uneducated; maxims of polity, which were applicable to the world before the invention of printing, are for that very reason inapplicable now." The matter, however, is, whether the press has banished poverty out of the world, or essentially reconciled the opposing interests of those who have something or

much to lose, and of those who have little or nothing, and this to the satisfaction of the latter; whether the press has done this or ever can. And again, whether with the wisdom, which it enables good men to diffuse among mankind, it enables not the bad and the ambitious to spread folly and discontent, unreasonableness and sedition; whether there is any thing in this world that is not to be considered as of a mixed nature, and however good in itself, to be used with constant circumspection; whether the pestilence that walketh in darkness, as found in modern times, may not be more fatal than the arrow (the insurrection of the feudal times) that flieth by day. I am alluding in this lecture to no such feudal times; I am speaking of what has happened in our own times, within twenty miles of our shore, and I am waging no war with the rights of free discussion, the education of the people, or the laudable efforts of constitutional reformers, in whatever province they appear; I speak of political rashness, presumption, enthusiasm; of a thirst for popular changes never to be appeased; of the abuse and caricature of the principles of improvement; of the revolutionary theories now circulating among us; of a giddy disposition to beat down the strong holds of our form of government; of a heartless, inhuman indifference to the obvious certainties of collision and confusion; and all this, while we are pressed by a heavy funded debt, incumbered with an overgrown population; while we are in the midst of our commerce and our manufactures, our systems of anticipation and credit, our banks, our bonds, and our speculations; and while every thing that concerns our safety, our prosperity, our dignity and honour, and even our character for common sense, depends on the maintenance of the peace and order of the community.

But I have done. I have now referred to such of the revolutionary phenomena as I have more particularly observed among us: they may be all more or less comprised under the two general heads of the dreams that are inconsistent with all government whatever, and those theories and reasonings that are directed more especially against our aristocracy, and therefore inconsistent with the constitution of this country. It is to these last, as the most plausible, that I have endeavoured more distinctly to call your attention, and to expose

their sophistry and their danger. If the constitution of this country is to be overthrown, and the times of Charles I. to be renewed, it must be by the introduction, in the first place, of a "démocratie royale," as it was in France. In that unhappy country, at that particular season, there was some excuse for her patriots, when they made this most calamitous mistake; but for us there would be none. The lessons of history will, I trust, not be lost upon us. It is my business to enforce them; on this account I have now stepped out of my way, to give this preliminary lecture. I am not aware that I have advanced a single position that I could not justify by the facts of the French Revolution.

LECTURE III.

PRELIMINARY LECTURE, 1835.

IN the course of lectures which I last year delivered from this place, I made a sort of summary of all the lectures that I had drawn up on the subjects of modern history, prior to the French Revolution. I thus converted two courses into one, not a little, to say the truth, from my impatience to return to the consideration of that momentous event. I had originally no intention of bringing down my lectures lower than the close of the American Revolution, and in this determination I for some years remained; but I at last perceived that this French Revolution would affect this country for many years, it was impossible to say how many, and that it was my duty to give some account of it, however imperfect, that the youth of the country, such as came to my lectures, should not go into the world without receiving from me every assistance that I was competent to offer them, on a subject that I saw, as I thought, would affect them and their posterity, probably for many generations.

Every succeeding year has but more and more confirmed the reasonableness of this apprehension. Indeed, from the first opening of these lectures, more than twenty years ago, I always closed my introductory lecture with endeavouring to impress upon my hearers the necessity of attending to the lessons which history affords. I endeavoured to warn them, that such was the situation of the world and of this country, that political mistakes, at no time without their danger, might to us be fatal; and that it was impossible to say, how much might not depend on the virtue and intelligence of the rising generation.

These were the words I used. Are they of less import now? This will surely not be thought. I do not mean to mix my-

self with the politics of the day, with the success or merits of particular ministers or measures. I have never done so; but I cannot be insensible to the scenes that are passing around me; to every thing, that in common with others, I hear, see, and feel during every hour of my waking existence. And if there be indeed any lessons which the French Revolution affords, of a nature sufficiently general to remain for ever, for the instruction of mankind, surely it must be to me a point of no ordinary anxiety and duty, if possible, to hold them up to the consideration of an audience, fast rising into manhood, and destined from their education, and the privileges and even the necessities of their rank and station, to take a part in the concerns of their country. Observe the fact, that I have now to state.

It is some years since I drew up these lectures on the French Revolution; and of late years I have been always obliged to state distinctly, that I read them just as they were originally written, lest my hearers should conceive that what I am delivering has been written under the influence and with reference to the political occurrences and parties of the day. The inference then is, that it highly imports you to consider what the nature of this French Revolution has been, and that though my remarks may be just or may be otherwise, that you will do well to reflect upon them, and on the great subject to which they are addressed; since they thus appear to have a reference to every thing that ought to be dear to you, as the intelligent members of this great kingdom.

The most obvious course of proceeding would now be, that I should read my lectures, and, if it should be necessary to add any fresh remarks to those which they at present contain, to give them in a new lecture at the conclusion of the whole. But I must state to you some circumstances, under the control of which I am now obliged to act otherwise. These French lectures consist of two courses, each of about twenty-four lectures: these cannot be all given in one year; this I lament, but I have no resource: I can only occupy one term in every year; that I may not interfere with other public lecturers, who take their particular term in like manner. And it happens, that in this French Revolution, the privileged orders were in the first place guilty of their appropriate faults and

mistakes, and afterwards the popular party. The whole case, therefore, cannot be exhibited till the two courses are gone through. And to crown the difficulty, many of you who may now be here to attend the first, may not be here to attend the second. This last consideration is of all the most important; and it is under the influence of it that I shall now proceed totally to reverse the order, which, as a lecturer, I should naturally adopt, and offer now and immediately such remarks as would find their proper place in the course, at the end of the lectures, not now at the beginning; such remarks as I do not like to postpone, as I do not choose any one to leave finally this lecture room, without having had submitted to his reflection; for if they be reasonable, the sooner he hears them the better; and if they should occur again and again in the ensuing lectures, this would be rather a matter of congratulation to me, as giving them additional weight: and I am not thinking of elegance or propriety of composition, but occupied with much more important anxieties.

The first and great lesson, then, which this Revolution contains, is, no doubt, addressed to the rulers of mankind, adopting the word rulers in its widest possible sense; including all that have a more direct authority and influence over their fellow creatures—the king, the nobility, the clergy, and the men of genius; all, who as in this instance of France and in all other instances, by their misconduct, lay the first foundations of revolutions. To this part of the subject I shall shortly address myself in an ensuing lecture, and not at present. The great leading observations, in the mean time, as belonging to this first part of my subject, are obvious:—that wars of ambition are to be avoided; all unnecessary expenditure; that there is no sower of sedition like the taxgatherer; that the different orders of the state are themselves to exhibit their appropriate virtues, or they will certainly not find them in those below them; that mild government is the interest of all; that abuses must be corrected in time; and that in governments there is nothing really stable, solid, or secure, that cannot be shown to be more or less agreeable to the great moral feelings of mankind. Lessons of this kind were most awfully exhibited by the French Revolution. A thousand volumes would not adequately describe them, as they ap-

peared in the course of that great convulsion. But when these first lessons have been addressed to all, who bear rule among mankind (I shall notice them in the ensuing lectures of this first course), there are other lessons that more immediately belong to those who would not only rule, but who would reform mankind, and who come forward under the high and imposing character of the correctors of the abuses and the improvers of the institutions of their country. I shall endeavour, in the present lecture, to make a few observations on this latter part of the general subject, that is, on the character and conduct of those who were engaged on the popular side of the Revolution; for it appears to me, that admonitions suggested by their mistakes and faults, may be found, not without their importance at all times to society, and of universal application.

These observations, I must repeat, would naturally be brought forward at the end of the second course, for it is in the second course that the faults of the popular party more distinctly appear. I must produce them, however, now, for the reasons I have mentioned.

In the lecture of to-morrow, and in the ensuing lectures, I shall be occupied with stating more particularly the faults of the higher or privileged orders.

The Revolution, I must for ever remind you, consists of lessons of very opposite nature, and they who are considering the one, must not be supposed ignorant of those of a different kind, which may in their turn, and at the proper season, be addressed to the consideration of a hearer. The first and leading observation, then, which I have to make is, that the example of the French Revolution is entirely against all merely experimental legislation. This was, in truth, the great point of difference between Mr. Burke and his controversial opponents; between him and Mackintosh, for instance, then a young man, but destined at a maturer period to be an eminent instructor of mankind; an instructor, not only by his learned and profound moral and historical disquisitions, but by the magnanimity with which, at a subsequent period, he acknowledged the political wisdom of Mr. Burke; again, by his anxiety at all times to form just opinions, and his benevolence and humanity on all occasions.

"You should have built upon old foundations," said the great master of political wisdom, Mr. Burke, addressing the Constituent Assembly, so early as the year 1790. "Your constitution, it is true, while you were out of possession, suffered waste and dilapidation; but you possessed in some parts the walls, and in all the foundations, of a noble and venerable castle. You might have repaired those walls, you might have built on those old foundations. Your constitution was suspended before it was perfected; but you had the elements of a constitution very nearly as good as could be wished. In your old states you possessed that variety of parts corresponding with the various descriptions, of which your community was happily composed; you had all that combination and all that opposition of interests; you had all that action and counteraction, which in the natural and political world, from the reciprocal struggle of contending powers, draws out the harmony of the universe. These opposite and conflicting interests, which you considered as so great a blemish in your old and in our present constitution, interpose a salutary check to all precipitate resolutions; they render deliberation a matter, not of choice, but of necessity; they make all change a subject of compromise, which naturally begets moderation; they produce improvements, preventing the sore evil of harsh, crude, unqualified reformations, and rendering all the headlong exertions of arbitrary power, in the few or in the many, for ever impracticable. Through that diversity of members and interests, general liberty had as many securities as there were separate views, in the several orders; while by pressing down the whole by the weight of a real monarchy, the separate parts would have been prevented from warping and starting from their allotted places.

"You had all these advantages in your ancient states, but you chose to act as if you had never been moulded into civil society, and had every thing to begin anew. You began ill, because you began by despising every thing that belonged to you. You set up your trade without a capital."

And again. "I am no stranger to the faults and defects of the subverted government of France; but the question is not now of the vices of that monarchy, but of its existence. Is it then true, that the French government was such as to be

incapable or undeserving of reform; so that it was absolutely necessary that the whole fabric should be at once pulled down, and the area cleared for the erection of a theoretic experimental edifice in its place? All France was of a different opinion in the beginning of the year 1789. The instructions to the representatives to the States General, from every district in that kingdom, were filled with projects for the reformation of that government, without the remotest suggestion of a design to destroy it. Had such a design been then even insinuated, I believe there would have been but one voice, and that voice for rejecting it with scorn and horror. Men have been sometimes led by degrees, sometimes hurried into things of which, if they could have seen the whole together, they never would have permitted the most remote approach."

But observations like these, with which the work abounds, deeply founded in a knowledge of the selfish passions and furious sympathies by which mankind may be agitated, were little to the taste of the captivating and eloquent reasoners by whom Mr. Burke was opposed in this country and in France.

"Let us ascend," said his animated antagonist, the author of the Vindiciæ Gallicæ, afterwards Sir James Mackintosh, "to more general principles, and hazard bolder opinions. Let us grant that the state of France was not so desperately incorrigible; let us suppose, that changes far more gentle, innovations far less extensive, would have remedied the grosser evils of her government, and placed it almost on a level with free and celebrated constitutions. These concessions, though far too large for truth, will not convict the Assembly. By what principle of reason or of justice were they precluded from aspiring to give France a government less imperfect than accident had formed in other states? Who will be hardy enough to assert, that a better constitution is not attainable than any which has hitherto appeared? Is the limit of human wisdom to be estimated in the science of politics alone, by the extent of its present attainments? Is the most sublime and difficult of all arts, the improvement of the social order, the alleviation of the miseries of the civil condition of man, to be alone stationary, amid the rapid progress of every other art, liberal and vulgar, to perfection? Where would be the atrocious guilt of a grand experiment to ascertain the portion of

freedom and happiness that can be created by political institutions?"

Such was the manner in which every difficulty of the subject was disposed of by the author of the Vindiciæ Gallicæ, and every thing that then exhibited in France the form of authority, was blown away and dispersed by a single consideration in addition; which as it is the consideration that is always brought forward on these occasions, I shall now quote. "It is in the first place," says he, "to be remarked, that all the bodies and institutions of the kingdom participated the spirit of the ancient government, and in that view were incapable of alliance with a free constitution; they were tainted by the despotism of which they were members or instruments. Absolute monarchies, like every other consistent and permanent government, assimilate every thing to their own genius. The nobility, the priesthood, the judicial aristocracy, were unfit to be members of a free government, because their corporate character had been formed under arbitrary establishments. To have preserved these great corporations would be to have retained the seeds of reviving despotism in the bosom of freedom. The three great corporations of the nobility, the church and the parliaments, these three aristocracies, were the pillars which in fact formed the government of France. The question then of reforming or destroying these bodies is fundamental; there is one general principle applicable to them all, adopted by the French legislators, 'that the existence of orders is repugnant to the principles of the social union.'"

Such is the overwhelming axiom at which the vindicator of the French Revolution (not indeed inconsistently) at once arrives. It was upon this desolating principle that the French legislators, through all their different revolutionary stages, proceeded, and with what fatal effect is sufficiently known; and it is in the same manner that revolutionists do now and will always proceed. The existing institutions are not animated, it seems, with what they call the spirit of the times, and are therefore voted in a state of hostility to the will of the community, that is, to their own political notions; they are, consequently, to be put down and swept away, as a sort of impediment and nuisance, which renders all exertions for

the public good, of which they are themselves the only judges, impossible. The march of the destroying angel of revolution is always the same: privilege, authority, property, life, each in succession, to be trampled down at its appointed time.

Our own poor constitution of England fares not much better at the conclusion of the work of Mackintosh, than does here the constitution of France; it just escapes with the remark, "that the grievances of England did not at present justify a revolution, but that they were in a rapid progress to that fatal state." And with respect to France at least, the author of the Vindiciæ Gallicæ consoles himself with the reflection, "that good men are at length permitted to indulge the hope, that the miseries of the human race are about to be alleviated, and that whatever may be the ultimate fate of the French Revolutionists, the friends of freedom must ever consider them as the authors of the greatest attempt that has hitherto been made in the cause of man."

The same was the strain of all the opponents of Mr. Burke, in and out of parliament; and I can myself remember the scoffings and the scorn with which the antiquated prejudices, as they were voted, of this philosophic statesman were treated by those who, youthful and ardent, were wise in their own eyes, and not only by them, but even by statesmen and enlightened reasoners, like Mr. Fox, who could not bear to be checked in the high career of their generous emotions, in the cause of what they supposed the liberties of mankind. But to those who come now to consider the subject at a safe distance from the passions which were excited by that awful crisis in the affairs of the world, it is sufficiently plain that the wisdom of the controversy was wholly with Mr. Burke; that the Revolution failed, and could not but fail, from the rage for experimental legislation that then prevailed. I hold this to be the great hinge upon which the Revolution turned, and one of its most important lessons. Let the student never lose sight of it while he reads the history, or while he endeavours to come to sound conclusions on political subjects. The conduct, the decrees, the reasonings of the Constituent Assembly, are at every moment within the reach of the censure and the just remark of Mr. Burke, that they were experimentalists, not statesmen, and not real reformers; that they knew nothing of their trade; that they were only architects of ruin.

No one understood the nature of the French Revolution so soon or so thoroughly as Mr. Burke; there was no advocate for it so splendid and so philosophic as Mackintosh. I would recommend to the student most diligently to meditate the Reflections of Mr. Burke on the one side, and the Vindiciæ Gallicæ of Mackintosh on the other. He will then have the whole philosophy of the case before him; though it must be always remembered, that as he is not now living in the midst of all the sanguine hopes, and generous sympathies, and contemptuous aspirations of the time, he will be totally unable to estimate all the merit of the sober prophet of ill, Mr. Burke, whose inspiration was of a diviner nature, and rose superior to the giddy passions of the hour.

Another lesson which the example of the French Revolution exhibits, is this: that when any existing system of government is disturbed, the tendency of every thing is to a republic. A republic may be a good or may be an evil; I agitate not now the general question: but let no mistake be made.

The reformer, who wishes that his reforms may lead to a republic, may proceed jocund and careless on his path, while he can but keep moving, and may carol as he goes his *ça ira*, for the natural direction of the path leads right away, at whatever length, and however at present obscured, to the object that he has in view—a republic. But the reformer, who has no such end to accomplish, should be very careful how he proceeds, and never forget the nature of the road on which he travels. He should consider well the company in which he is; where they are going; whether they will stop or can be made to stop when he himself would stop; and whether he can safely borrow the assistance of those, who are in the mean time only using him as a tool to forward their own ends—ends which he may entirely disapprove and even abhor. The French Revolution (as do all revolutions) exhibits edifying examples of the manner in which the successive parties each marched in concert together to certain points, and then separated, to the immediate destruction of the more moderate who went first, and who, by their mistaken association with those behind them, pulled down ruin upon themselves and eventually on their country. Thus in the Revolution of

France, first come Mounier and the more early patriots, who are superseded by La Fayette and his friends; these again by Vergniaud and the Girondists, who are overpowered by Danton, and those who were his associates in the massacres of September, who are themselves destroyed by their old allies, Robespierre and his triumvirate. Here was, indeed, a stop—for the fury of human guilt and party rage could go no further. It is ever thus. It was the same in our own first great Revolution: we began with Lord Falkland, and ended with Cromwell.

Look at the reasonings of the Vindiciæ Gallicæ; they are all of the republican school. Look at the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly; they were, from the first, all of the same nature: nor can this well be otherwise. On all such occasions the people were appealed to, often in a very gross sense of the word; but even in the best of cases, it is more or less the physical strength of the community, that is openly or tacitly brought forward. And the acceptation of this term, of the people, becomes more and more coarse as the reform proceeds; and so become the agents, the measures, the sentiments produced, and the objects to be accomplished: all grow more and more republican, the sacrifices to be made of their better wisdom by men of character, who wish to retain popularity; in like manner, to be made to party and to the attainment of power; the vulgar pledges that are to be given to the multitude by the base men who wish only to obtain seats for their own selfish ends—all this was shown in the French Revolution, long before the Constituent Assembly could be under the influence of the interference of the combined powers. And the lesson, such as I have described it, is but too awful to those who wish only to improve, not to break up any of the older governments of Europe; those, I mean, that are not founded on a republican model.

It should never be forgotten, that monarchy, aristocracy, a church establishment, are all artificial contrivances for the government of mankind; the best that can exist in a country, more particularly an old country, for dispensing to the people the blessings of steady order and sober religion, the security of their property and the rewards, whether of their industry or their genius in literature or the arts; the best that can be conceived for the attainment of these important ends, the

great ends of civilized society: still it should never be forgotten, that these institutions are all contrivances of an artificial nature; they are not the first unenlightened and more obvious suggestions of the human mind. Agitate society, and call the rude reasonings and first natural principles of mankind into action; and kings, and priests, and nobles are the last things that will be thought of as objects of respect.

Even the historian Hume, when speaking of the insurrection in the time of Richard II., talks of "the ideas of primitive equality which are engraven in the hearts of all men." And Shakspeare, who hits off every thing, makes one of the followers of Jack Cade observe, that "it had never been merry world in England since gentlemen came up." And thus, in the French Revolution, you will hear of nothing from the first outbreak of the agitation but of the sovereignty of the people, and the rights of man, understood in the grossest sense of the words. "Liberty and equality" was soon shouted by the multitude, and the tendency of things to a republic was almost irresistible, long before the first patriots and virtuous men of the Revolution were aware of their danger. It follows not from hence, that men are not to reform the institutions of their country; but let them understand their case, and this is all that this lecture aims at. Let them understand their case—the case as it is exhibited by a calm review of such events as took place during the rise and progress of the French Revolution. Let them observe, too, that on these occasions, the men of talents, of youthful activity, of enterprise and genius, all of them who are not personally benefiting at the time by the existing institutions of their country, instantly throw their weight into the opposite scale and are leagued against them; are all eager to make the constitution of their country more and more popular; all eager to get rid of those orders and institutions which are not only of no benefit to themselves, but are, on the contrary, in the way of their ambition and the display of their talents; which raise not themselves but other men, unworthily as they think, to eminence; men who thus become but too often objects of their malignity and envy. Let not good men suppose, that they will be assisted in their patriotic labours for reform only by the intelligent and the virtuous, the men of property, of experience,

and consideration in their country. These may be their first assistants, but they will soon be mixed up and followed by others of a very different description, who will bid higher for popular favour, and win by their very vices, crimes, and absurdities, those honours that should be the reward of wisdom and virtue only.

Again. It always happens in periods of political excitement, that there are men found distinguished for their rank and property, who take a lead in the popular proceedings; and it is immediately supposed, that the movement must be safe while they are at the head of it; that they must know what they are doing; and that we have a sufficient pledge for the wisdom of their conduct in their obvious interests and acknowledged virtues.

The French Revolution gives no countenance whatever to reasoning of this kind, but shows that no man can be out of the reach of political enthusiasm, and none incapable of committing political mistakes, in defiance of their personal interests, of the most grievous nature. Such political enthusiasm was felt, such political mistakes were made, by the first men of rank, intelligence, and integrity in France, during the earlier periods of the Revolution. On all such occasions it is in vain to talk of good intentions, of disinterestedness and patriotism, when men are speaking and acting in a manner injurious to the welfare of their country. It is in politics as in virtue, a man should not only mean right, but do right. It should be observed, indeed, out of justice to such men, that their original fault has been the noble fault of thinking too well of human nature. Nothing so unfavourable to our own moral feelings as thinking ill; but public men, and above all, virtuous Reformers, must never forget, that among mankind are always found those, of whose views and feelings, judging from themselves, they can have no conception whatever—no conception whatever of their unreasonableness, their absurdity, their indifference to good, their relish for mischief, their unprincipled ambition, and even their positive unequivocal wickedness.

Another lesson to be drawn from the example of this French Revolution, is the impossibility of maintaining the edifice of a monarchy, if the foundations are of a democratic

nature. You may take a monarchy and mix into the system an infusion of democracy with the happiest effect: the whole will be thus liberalized, and opened, and rendered fit for a society of free and enlightened men; fit to call out their talents, reward their virtues, and secure their happiness. But the converse is impossible. Take a democracy and ingraft upon it a monarchy; and this artificial institution of a monarchy, for want of correspondent artificial institutions, an aristocracy, a church establishment, and such forms and institutions as generate monarchical notions and habits, will soon be shuffled off, as useless, expensive, dangerous to liberty (such will be the pretences), an incumbrance to the progress of the human mind, and an insult to the rights of man. From an unreasonable jealousy of the kingly power, and from that tendency to republicanism in times of agitation, which I have already noted, the early and virtuous patriots of the French Revolution, La Fayette and others, made what they called a démocratie royale; that is, they abolished the titles of nobility, put an end to primogeniture, broke up the church establishment, proclaimed the sovereignty of the people, placed every thing on democratic foundations, and then with loyalty in their language, and no want of it in their hearts, idly set up their king to maintain his power without any of the proper supports of royal authority, and left him to depend on the wisdom of his measures and the love of his people; proper adjuncts to royal power, no doubt, and its best preservatives, but only in conjunction with others. On this important subject, the necessity of executive power, and in a monarchical and mixed constitution the proper supports of it, nothing can be so edifying as a comparison of the reasonings of the author of the Vindiciæ Gallicæ and Mr. Burke. The veteran statesman had been too long versed in the affairs of mankind, and had too long studied, and been indeed personally affected, by the workings of the monarchical and democratic principles, in his own mixed and free constitution of England, to be satisfied with the reasonings and conduct of the Constituent Assembly; and he loudly denounced them as shallow and superficial (so indeed they were), as totally unfit for the occasion, and founded on a total ignorance of what the duties, and the offices, and the dangers, and the capacities of the supreme executive power really are.

Speaking of the new constitution of France—this démocratie royale—"What seems its head," he cried out in the words of Milton, in his description of Death,

"What seems its head
The likeness of a kingly crown has on."

The likeness only, and the constitution was therefore proclaimed by him to be a shape—

"If shape it might be called, that shape had none
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb;
Or substance might be called, that shadow seemed,
For each seemed either; black it stood as night,
Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell."

Such were the sentiments of Mr. Burke. And he declared that their king was at best but a channel to convey to the National Assembly such matter as it might import that body to know; that he was but a machine, without any sort of deliberative discretion in any one act of his function; that it was not in nature that, situated as the king of the French then was, he could respect himself, or be respected by others, and that he saw nothing in the executive force (he could not call it authority), that had even an appearance of vigour, or that had the smallest degree of just correspondence, or sympathy, or amicable relation with the supreme power, either as it now exists, or as it is planned for future government."

An over jealousy of the executive power is so common a mistake in the friends of freedom, that it is quite edifying, as I have observed, to consider the subject, first, in the pages of Burke, and next, of Mackintosh, and, more particularly, in the debates of the Constituent Assembly. "An organ to collect the public will, and a hand to execute it," are the only necessary constituents, according to the author of the Vindiciæ, of the social union: the popular representative forms the first, the executive officer the second. This is the theory, it seems; a theory that would not be admitted in this unqualified state, by the president of a republic; yet such were the doctrines of the day among the more ardent friends of freedom in England, and nearly all the friends of freedom in France. They are instructive, for they were fatal to the cause of

freedom, and ever must be, if a mixed and free monarchy be intended. Nothing can be so unreasonable, so puerile, as to suppose that no power is to exist but what belongs to the popular assembly: on the contrary, let the executive magistrate, with his aristocracy, have their acknowledged share, and the king has no longer any temptation to be either a tyrant or an enemy; nor have they; all will be well, and cannot be well otherwise: the liberalism of which we hear so much would be very well extended, in common with others, to the wearers of crowns and coronets.

One word more on the subject of the executive magistrate, and the precarious nature of all such authority, if not properly assisted by other supports than the mere wisdom and gratitude of a community. Even so early as the year 1790, Mr. Burke observed,—"Your parliament of Paris told your king, that in calling the States together he had nothing to fear but the prodigal excess of their zeal, in providing for the support of the throne. It is right that these men should hide their heads. They have seen the French rebel against a mild and lawful monarch with more fury, outrage, and insult, than ever any people has been known to rise against the most illegal usurper, or the most sanguinary tyrant; their resistance was made to concession; their revolt was from protection; their blow was aimed at a hand holding out graces, favours, and immunities."

They who can but remember what afterwards followed will surely not read a paragraph like this without serious reflection on the frail nature of human authority, and the uncertain passions of the people: not even without emotion will it be read by those who can reflect upon the qualities of the king; who can respect piety, can love the gentle and the benevolent; can pity misfortune, and feel for fallen greatness; can conceive what is the sickness of heart, that arises from the continued disappointment of intended kindness and good designs; who can mourn over a man that, by the circumstance of his birth, not by any act or choice of his own, was placed in a station for which he was at the time not fitted; was fallen on evil days; was too good for the age in which he lived; whose virtues served him but as enemies, and who was massacred himself, because he could not bear to shed the blood of his people.

Again, as another lesson to be found in the history of the French Revolution, it must be remarked, that whenever the times become critical, and society is disturbed by men who are indifferent to its peace, it is the clergy that are the first to be attacked; when revolutionary altars are dressed, as I cannot but repeat*, they are the first victims; they are naturally the representatives of peace and order; their habits, their studies, indispose them to innovation and experiment; they are necessarily in the way of those who are desirous of change, still more of those who are ready to risk confusion; and being men whose profession it is, by their expostulations, example, and interference, to disseminate piety and check licentiousness, they are naturally disagreeable, troublesome, and hateful to those who are the leaders in civil commotions. Among such men, especially among the most daring, and therefore the most effective of them, there are always found those who are at least little interested about the doctrines of religion, valuing at no high price either its influence or its ministers. The possessions, too, of the church are an insulated species of property, very tempting to revolutionists, and those who want it for political purposes. Men of the ecclesiastical order are themselves also an insulated description of men, neither from their numbers nor their characters qualified to defend themselves. On all these accounts they are the first to be vituperated and insulted, assaulted and plundered by revolutionists who mean ill, and by revolutionists who know not what they mean. The example of the French Revolution is entirely to this effect, and it goes strongly to warn mankind that men of this sacred character are to be vigilantly defended by the thoughtful and the good, and their political consequence to be upheld, on every principle not only of justice, generosity, and humanity, but even on the principle of common security: I say common security, for in the next place, it is to be observed, that immediately after the clergy come the aristocracy: they are the next objects of revolutionary, that is, of republican violence; of the passion for change, of the contempt of existing institutions; their

* The audience varied every year.

usefulness is questioned, their privileges thought inconsistent with the rights of the people; the opinions which naturally belong to them voted fit only to be entertained by the enemies of the commonweal; their artificial rank thought unworthy of the dignity of our common nature, mocked at, and despised; and finally, in their persons they are hunted down, exiled, or destroyed. So was it in France. The first cry was, "The bishops to the Lanterne!" the next, "The aristocrats." So will it be ever in revolutions, when the nature of the constitution of the government is mixed, and the clergy and aristocracy are had in honour, with their appropriate places of distinction among the forms of the constitution.

The great bulwark and cement of all and of every thing is the aristocracy (and this republican revolutionists know very well), and it is therefore the aristocracy, under all its divisions, whose privileges, functions, authority, consequence, and influence, they labour, directly and indirectly, by every plea and pretext and engine, by the press, by speeches at public meetings and public dinners, by the declamations of their philosophy, and by the menaces of physical force, to disparage, to disunite, and to destroy; the very merit and meaning of our House of Lords, (for instance that they are not responsible to constituents, and can therefore protect us from the rashness or tyranny of the many), is made their indictment and crime.

Again, and as another lesson to be noted. They who read the history of the French Revolution will do well to remark how loose were the notions of the members of the Constituent Assembly on the subject of property, and what were the consequences. The most distinguished of them, Mirabeau, could proclaim aloud that property was only the salary which the state paid to those who dispensed to others the products of it. Property is, no doubt, somewhat various in its nature; there is the property which a man has in his estate; there is trust property, such as is held by a church establishment; there is the sort of property which a judge or public functionary has in the salary that has been allotted to him by the state: there is great diversity in the different tenures of property, and a very convenient confusion can be easily introduced into the subject by designing men or impatient reformers. As civilization, however, cannot exist, nor the greater portion of

the virtues and charities of human life, without the institution of property, in the general sense of the term, men cannot be too jealous or too scrupulous with regard to it, particularly when they are in the hands of experimentalists in legislation. They have a sufficient example in the French legislators. From general and abstract reasonings, like those of Mirabeau, such reasonings as human ingenuity can never be at a loss to produce, in favour of any political measure that may be splendid in promise, or convenient in the way of revolution, the first more regular statesmen of the Constituent Assembly proceeded to reason about property, and at last to dispose of it (that of the church, for instance), exactly as suited their views, till, in the event, their philosophy was so improved upon by those that succeeded them, that all property, and life itself, became but the tenure of an hour, at the mercy of demagogues, who, with their infuriated mobs, had no respect for either. It would be very unworthy of the common sense of men, when in a state of comparative tranquillity, if the rapid growth of cruelty and injustice on these subjects, as witnessed in France, did not serve as distinct admonitions to them, to beware of the approaches of evil. Pretexts are never wanting on these occasions: the crimes and abuses of the religious orders served our own Henry VIII., the brutal tyrant of the Reformation; the necessity of maintaining the Revolution, in like manner, served, first, the experimental statesmen of the Constituent Assembly, and next, the ruffians of the Revolution.

Again, the conclusion from the example of the French Revolution is not in favour of a single legislative assembly. Mr. Burke from the first complained that the members of the Constituent Assembly were never suffered to get cool; that every thing was done at a heat; that there was no revision, no proper deliberation. All this was but too true; and these, the inevitable evils of a single Assembly, became more and more inveterate and fatal, as the Revolution rolled on. But it is not merely in the want of providing wisdom that a single assembly will always fail; all experience shows that there is no tyranny and injustice of which a single assembly is not capable; and this, be the assembly what it may, of the lowest or of the highest nature, and however

composed. Set ten or a dozen people round a table, of whatever education or complexion, trustees, members of a corporation, partners of a commercial or mining concern, and they will in this, their joint capacity, do acts of which each of them, as individuals, would be perfectly ashamed. On these occasions men, by a sort of mental legerdemain, shift the burthen, each from himself to his neighbours, and for once, in defiance of Euclid, the whole does not consist of all its parts.

Again. It is another lesson to be drawn from this Revolution, the caution with which great principles of government must be thrown out to the people, liable to their interpretation, and likely to be acted upon as they choose to understand them. All government, for instance, is intended for the happiness of the people; a sort of axiom this in political science; but it is ill expressed by the phrase, "the sovereignty of the people." And if in these words it is proclaimed by statesmen in their speeches, and legislators in their decrees, the people will soon convert it into a reason for doing whatever they think proper, and for setting at nought every other principle that ought to bind them, every principle of order and right, of humanity and justice: a similar effect will be produced on their leaders. "The sovereign people" was the great watchword through all the various stages of the Revolution, and no other was necessary when the demagogues had to excite them to an insurrection, when they had to storm a palace or an assembly, insult their king, or tyrannize over their legislators.

Through all the sittings of the Constituent Assembly, you will hear of no rights but those of the people, of nothing but of their sovereignty; that their will was not only law, but wisdom, and whatever a statesman could desire as a sanction for his votes and measures; their happiness was all that was to be accomplished, and of that they were the best and only judges. You will see the consequences of such abused and perverted theories; you will see what the consequences were, and are likely to be, when those who should counsel for a nation, listen to no counsels but those which come from the people themselves, or rather from those, who, on various accounts, take a prominent part in their concerns; you will see the consequences when those who are not the members of a

legislative assembly, express their opinions from the galleries on what is passing beneath; and finally, and above all, you will see what follows from the existence of clubs and associations, regularly meeting, discussing, and determining whatever they think affects the public weal; organizing the kingdom into similar assemblies, and constituting themselves, in fact, the nation, to whose wisdom and strength all other wisdom and strength are to be submitted. All these things you will see: they are the consequences that immediately followed from the eternal production and abuse of the great abstract axioms of political science, particularly that of the sovereignty of the people; and they are the lessons of history: and it is only to me a matter of astonishment, that there can be any man professing to be either a philosopher or a statesman, on whom they have not the most decided effect, in teaching him, if he means well, to beware how he turns away from better reasonings that may be addressed to him, and appeals to what he calls the sense of the country, which means any thing and every thing; still more, how he refers so constantly to the will of the people, which can, in no interpretation of practical sense or reason, be considered as other than an appeal to physical strength, no other than revolutionary menace, to be followed by insult and outrage. Lessons like those of the French history might surely be expected to have some effect in moderating his expectations, in teaching him the treachery of popular feelings, the necessary differences of human opinions; how easy is the descent to confusion, how valuable is every form, and principle, and institution, that can at all be fitted and has hitherto been able to maintain peace and order in any collection of human beings—human beings, such as they are, and ever must be found, with all the passions and necessities of their nature raging about them; urging them on to deeds of selfishness and violence, to disregard authority, and law, and the rights of property, and trample down the unoffending and the weak.

Another great principle liable to abuse may, in like manner, be mentioned, the freedom of the press.

Knowledge is, no doubt, the great treasure of mankind; the great distinction of the species; the means of happiness; the defence against every evil. Knowledge cannot, therefore,

it is said, be too widely diffused, particularly political knowledge; the press must therefore be free.

The French Revolution, however, affords no arguments in favour of the unrestrained liberty of the press; much the contrary.

Arthur Young, when he visited France about the time of the opening of the States General, though entirely a friend to freedom and to the Revolution, was quite astonished, and borne down by the infinity of pamphlets that were every hour appearing, by the grossness of their falsehoods, and the violence of their sedition. Why does not the government exert itself, he cried to himself; why does not the government punish the authors of these publications? What unaccountable apathy, what fatal inertness! It did not occur to Arthur Young, and this is the lesson of the whole, that government can do nothing during the *season* of these epidemics of sedition, if nothing has been done before; if no provision has been made in anticipation of this very possible calamity; and if the provision is not made use of, and efforts made to check the calamity in its infancy, before its growth has rendered it too powerful. But this is to suppose the press restrained. It is not easy to say how it is to be restrained. Verdicts cannot be got when they are really wanted; and yet what other resource in grave cases of libel, but an appeal to the verdict of a jury? The possibility of this appeal, and such education, moral and religious, as can be administered to the lowest orders; these seem the only expedients that can be resorted to under a free government. But the difficulty must always be considered as of the most perplexing nature, and as never ceasing, though varying in intensity. And the rulers of a mixed government must not sit down, careless and at ease, under the shelter of general axioms, of the benefits of knowledge, the necessity of freedom of discussion, the rapid improvement of the world, the impossibility of resisting the spirit of the age, that virtue is the result of knowledge, vice of ignorance, and other positions of like nature; the statesmen, who mean that their community shall enjoy the benefits of a mixed and free government, must not satisfy themselves with these splendid generalities: they must never forget that the press is in its very nature essentially democratic; that the

press neither has, nor ever can, banish poverty out of the world; that the press cannot reconcile the opposing interests of those who have something or much to lose, and those who have little or nothing, and this to the satisfaction of the latter; that to suppose this, in any old country, is, on a grave subject like this, to be a little too ridiculous; that among the writers and editors of daily and periodical publications, there are those who, as I must always insist, depend for their daily bread, many of them upon agitation, all of them upon excitement, all of them upon finding something amiss. How else are they to show the superiority of their sense, and the value of what they offer to the public, who, as they are well aware, are but languid readers and indifferent customers, when they think themselves already prosperous? Statesmen living under a mixed government, in an old country, must not think lightly of these things; they must well consider, whether those who are the defenders of the best interests of society, can have any chance among the lower orders in any competition for sale or for influence with the preachers of folly, discontent, unreasonableness and sedition, licentiousness and obscenity. It may be very true that mankind owe every thing to the press, and, speaking in general terms, to the freedom of it; but men are seriously to reflect, notwithstanding, whether there is any thing in this world that is not to be considered as of a mixed nature, and, however good in itself, to be used with constant circumspection: certainly there is nothing; the freedom of the press, the liberty of the people, the benefits of education, the gifts of nature, the pleasures of the mind and the imagination, the enjoyments of society, every thing, any thing, that in the shape of good can be named or thought of, even the sacred aspirations of religion itself, all must be used with circumspection: and a general truth of this kind, imposed upon our reflection by the obvious imperfections and constitution of our nature, clearly leads to the conclusion, that the press is, after all, not to be a chartered libertine, and that it is to be subject to responsibility, and not to be like the wind, to blow as it listeth.

Again. Prior to the French Revolution, mankind were never so admonished as they now have been, of the sacrifices that men will make for party purposes, of the extent of poli-

tical sympathy, of the degree of fanaticism to which it may be carried. Religious fanaticism had been long acknowledged as an element in the composition of our nature; of political sympathy strong examples had been shown; but never had it been imagined, that men contending with each other, upon mere terrestrial objects, could be exasperated into the state of rage and fury which had been only exemplified, when their passions had got engaged on religious subjects, and they were vindicating the cause, as they supposed, of their God. Never had it been conceived, that the massacre of Bartholomew was to be outdone by the massacres of political animosity: yet such has been the fact; scenes have been exhibited of horror totally unutterable. It now appears, that the passions, even of civilized man, can be excited by mistaken political feelings, as by mistaken religious feelings, by a theory, as by a doctrine, by a contest for political domination, as by a contest for spiritual power, till he is in no respect different in the insanity of his cruelty from the Indian savage, who is revelling in the torments and drinking the blood of his fallen foe; that he even surpasses him; for the civilized man in a state of political fanaticism, may be seen reasoning all the time, and sitting down calmly to estimate and triumphantly to proclaim the prodigies of his patriotism. I blush to add, that when these awful atrocities have become matters of history, men can be found so far under the influence of this political enthusiasm, as to bear to look upon such spectacles; as to mutter something about the cause of liberty, about necessary sacrifices, about the price that must be paid for so inestimable a blessing; in a word, to leave one to suppose, that they would themselves, under proper temptations of political zeal, have been actors in the scene.

The possibility of excesses by the friends of freedom had not escaped the considerate mind of Mr. Burke. "When I see the spirit of liberty in action," says Mr. Burke, in his Reflections, "I see a strong principle at work, and this, for a while, is all I can possibly know of it; the wild gas, the fixed air, is plainly broke loose, but we ought to suspend our judgment until the first effervescence is a little subsided, till the liquor is cleared, and until we see something deeper than the agitation of a troubled and frothy surface."

Admonitions of this kind, are the admonitions of the French Revolution, that ought never to be forgotten by statesmen of the world, or rather by the reformers of the world. They have seen in this instance, as Mr. Burke observed, the beginnings of confusion growing by moments into a strength to heap mountains upon mountains, and to wage war with Heaven itself; and they are to be very careful how they deal with the inflammable sympathies of mankind; how they at all disturb, still less break up, their general habits of thought and action; how deep is their responsibility whenever they cease to attend to the perilous nature of their proceedings. Certainly, the example of the French Revolution shows how immense may be the changes produced, if what is called the spirit of the times be indulged. In a very few months France saw her provinces new modelled, her corporations destroyed, her nobility extinguished, her church stripped of its hereditary possessions, her army merged in an universal levy of the people, her king left without dignity or power, and every thing submitted to the will of one popular assembly, or rather to the will of the populace without. Assuredly one of the most memorable lessons of the French Revolution, is the rapidity of the growth of evil, when the minds of men are put into a state of political agitation; the more violent the measure, the more sure to be adopted; the more daring the demagogue, the more sure to succeed; nothing so rapid as the progress of the movement; like the cloud of the prophet, what was this moment but a speck in the horizon, is seen the next "to cover the heaven with darkness."

It is a poor consolation, and too unworthy for me to notice, what is sometimes said, that our system may last our time at least, and that we are safe, whatever may become of posterity. "Esto perpetua," "live for ever," was once the voice of patriotism, when speaking of our constitution; it is ill exchanged for any other.

I thus return not a little to the point from which I originally set out, that the general habits of thought and action that exist in a community are not to be broken up; that the common bands of long established authority are not to be loosened, the reins not thrown upon the neck, nor the ordinary course of the sun disturbed by the presumptuous Phaetons who would

usurp the chariot: the world has been already once on fire. Nothing so ridiculous, as appears to some men, the dull routine by which, under an infinite diversity of forms in different constitutions and countries, the duties of civil obedience are maintained, maintained without effort, and as a thing of course, like the insensible actions of our vital functions, when in a state of health and ease. Is this then nothing? Is it nothing, when we consider of what elements human beings are composed, is it nothing to achieve the great problem of drawing them out of their savage state, and then keeping them in order? On what possible grounds do men make light of prescription, and custom, and usage? In the practical affairs of the world, they are all in all. Men, it is said, institute society from a sense of common interest, and the necessity of mutual protection; this has seldom or never been the fact. But be it so. What wise man would afterwards deprive them of those long established habits and associations which render them contented to remain in it? Who would deprive them of the influence of their imaginations to be added to that of their reason? Who would deprive a nation of a sort of visible immortality in its institutions, be they what they may, if found to be sufficient to the great purposes of life? Who would take from men a sort of confidence in the peace and order of their community? Who would rob them of a constant sense and belief, that they may depend on the future in the disposal of their children, in the exercise of their own industry, in the prospects of themselves and of those who are to come after them? How is patriotism to be generated or to exist, if there be nothing fixed and visible, to love and to respect; if every thing is to be transitory, fluctuating, and uncertain, abandoned to the mercy of the shifting conclusions and speculations of those who reason?

And here we reach another great lesson of the French Revolution, the last that I shall mention; that men are not to be left to their reason alone. This was a great point from the first contended for by Mr. Burke; and he remonstrated very justly, against the new system of resolving every thing into the abstract speculations of reason, of making the understanding every thing, and the heart nothing.

"On this scheme of things," he cried, "a king is but a

man, a queen is but a woman, a woman but an animal, and an animal not of the highest order; all the decent drapery of life (he said) was to be rudely torn off;" and he held, and with reason held, that this was a barbarous philosophy, the offspring of cold hearts and muddy understandings, and as void of solid wisdom, as it was destitute of all taste and elegance. Certainly it was destitute of solid wisdom.

The Almighty Master, it will be seen on a little reflection, has secured the great interests of mankind, their moral, social, and religious feelings, and has adjusted the machinery of society on many other and far more powerful principles than the reasonings of the understanding: these reasonings, rightly directed, will never be found to oppose, but on the contrary, to strengthen and confirm them. To each are allotted their different provinces: the understanding may regulate and sanction; it is not there, however, that the moving power is to be found.

These doctrines, the utilitarian doctrines, which were thus reprobated by Mr. Burke, were, in truth, the doctrines of revolutionists, convenient to them, necessary to them; of such men they will always be the doctrines; they are so at this moment. But the French Revolution stands a memorable example to mankind, of the awful crimes and enormities that may be the result, if men succeed in obliterating from the heart and mind the characters which it has pleased the Almighty to inscribe upon them.

On this part of the subject of the French Revolution I have taken every pains that I am competent to take; but my labours appear, in a lecture on the subject of Mr. Godwin, in the second course of my lectures, not in the first, which I am now about to deliver. And even of such labours, imperfect and inadequate as they are, the topics are so important, that I can give you no description of what I have thus offered to the consideration of my hearers. The pages, however, of Mr. Burke may be your security. His reasonings are somewhat diffuse, and not always given in a manner sufficiently direct and precise; but the more you read and reflect on these subjects, the more sound and important they will appear, for they will be the better understood. They come from a mind naturally of a very superior order, mellowed by long and various

experience, enlightened by extensive general reading, and armed and accomplished by a thorough acquaintance with all that constitutes the proper knowledge of a moralist as well as of a statesman. There is no part of his immortal work which was more justified by the event, and in itself more valuable than the moral part of it. Whatever may be said of other parts, by men of different political views and feelings, here, at least, he was indeed a philosopher and a prophet.

But a reference to this part of the subject, the moral part of it, has brought to my remembrance such passages in the history of the Revolution, has summoned before my view such scenes of guilt and horror, such massacres and executions, such scenes of undistinguishing and unparalleled murder, that I am appalled, paralyzed, and struck down by the very thought of them. I turn from the presence of them, as they rise to my recollection, cold and shuddering; so will you hereafter. It might have been supposed, that our common nature could not have been capable of such atrocities. Who, that would not have said, prior to the French Revolution, "Amid civilized man, at least, such things are impossible." You will read them in such histories as remain. How little but the mere general facts can now be known, and how faint are all such images of what was perpetrated and endured! But how awful is the lesson! how awful is it to think what the human heart may be brought to; what men may become when they cast aside the common attributes of their nature! Could it be believed, that men who had, from the crimes they were committing, ceased to be men, were at the time, as you will see them, reasoning, speaking, writing, as if they still belonged to our kind? From the provinces, in the midst of their massacres, they were sending dispatches to their government, announcing their claim to the applauses of their country. In the midst of their bloody decrees and speeches in the Assembly, they were declaring themselves the very models of patriotism and benevolence; their hall resounded with harangues about the sublimity of virtue, while they were proclaiming that death was an eternal sleep and ordering fêtes and processions to the Goddess of Reason; and in society, parents and children were vaunting their exemplary love for

their country, because they were sending each other to the guillotine.

I must hasten to the lesson of this moral part of the general subject, which cannot be delayed for a moment. You must learn, then, to be deeply sensible of the crimes which your nature may be made capable of committing. You must never tamper with your moral feelings. The understanding can pander to the passions; can at any time, as it appears, when called upon, invent a logic that shall lull the sense of guilt, and obliterate in your hearts the distinctions of right and wrong; even banish that first and common feeling of humanity that recoils from the shedding of blood. You must be warned by these phenomena of your nature, the facts of the Revolution. You must keep the great original instincts and intuitions, which the Almighty has given you, fresh and vigorous, and unstained and unadulterated, and whole and perfect, in your bosoms; they are the guardians of your virtues, and the ministers of your happiness. You must not suffer any leading passion in its fury, nor the understanding in its servility, to rob you of these instincts and intuitions,—your own best defence and the best security of the commonwealth.

Whether in morals or in politics, you must not suffer the sophister to approach you. You must be careful of your means, whatever be your end: and you must never presume to quit the great beaten paths of human duty, such as they have been always and from the first, shaped out and prepared by the common sense and feelings of our species. These are a wisdom above the wisdom of man, imparted to him from above: and you will see in the annals of the French Revolution what man becomes, when he attempts to be wiser than the God that made him.

LECTURE IV.

AMERICA.

The two following Lectures were given in 1836, *after the course on the second part of the French Revolution.*

IN the concluding lecture, which I yesterday delivered, I bore my testimony to the value of the constitution of government under which I have lived; no testimony could be given with greater sincerity. The lecture was drawn up in the year 1828; and the experience of subsequent years has but given a fresh interest and warmth to the sentiment then expressed. This sentiment has naturally arisen from the studies connected with my particular situation; from observation of the uncertainty of every thing human; from long meditation on the irritable passions of mankind, as exhibited in their history; from the fury, the total unreasonableness with which they will contend for their opinions, right or wrong; from a thorough sense of the difficulty with which the edifices of human happiness can be erected among beings, such as human beings essentially are; and a deep conviction of the sober estimates which it becomes all philosophers to make, when they are considering the political situation either of their own countrymen or of the communities around them. Nature sets her goods on the right hand and on the left; a truth this, obvious to every man in the common concerns of life, and equally certain on the larger scale of his political existence. Is a man, as a private individual, desirous to be rich? He must turn from the pleasures of peaceful study. Does he wish, as a patriot and a statesman, for the order, the security, and the refinement of a limited monarchy? He must forego the animated bustle, the pride, the independence and the sense of personal consequence, to be found in a republic. On all occasions, no folly can be greater than inconsistency in our expectations. It is a great source of discontent and unhappiness to men in a private station; and in public situa-

tions it often renders them the very torments of their own age and country. It would be improper to conceal from you, that reflections of this kind have been more than ever impressed upon my mind by the occurrences of later years. I am quite amazed at the careless indifference with which some men seem to regard the political blessings by which they are surrounded; the total unconsciousness that they seem to bear about them, of the value of the constitution of government under which they have been born and educated: they seem struck with mental blindness, when it is the benefit of their own system of polity that they are to contemplate; they seem to think nothing of the security of person and property, the protection of every man, while endeavouring to better his condition; the freedom of thought; the advantages of safe and cheerful study; the fair license that is allowed to every man, to display his talents and his genius, of whatever nature they may be, in art, in science, in literature, in society, in the senate, at the bar, in whatever manner he may wish to be useful, or hope to be distinguished; all these things seem to be considered as things of course, as things which can be accomplished without difficulty, when men are once associated together; as things that may be sported with and put to the hazard of any experiment that may be proposed; as things that may be left behind, without ceremony or regret, by those who are hastening on to the introduction of some other system, as they suppose, of greater political happiness. I confess, I cannot understand the reasonableness of views of this nature, and I know not how I can discharge my duty better, than by protesting against them; than by endeavouring to save your minds, at the same time, from exclusive systems in politics; from supposing, that men cannot be in a state of happiness or respect, except under one particular form of government; above all, to impress upon your minds this great truth, that opposite advantages and disadvantages belong to different systems; and that there is no folly greater than inconsistency in our expectations. Time was, when our constitution was never mentioned but in terms of panegyric—"Our glorious constitution in church and state." Such was always the phrase adopted on every occasion, on the hustings, in the senate, in the books of lawyers, and the trea-

tises of philosophers. In what manner has the constitution forfeited these honourable distinctions? We have witnessed the greatest convulsion that has ever happened in Europe, since the fall of the Roman empire, yet our island still survives. Every state and potentate was insulted, trampled upon, or destroyed; the only exception was England. Nay, to England was it owing that any one state or empire now exists, under any form or appearance of its former independence. Whatever else may be contested, these are facts that cannot be disputed; and whatever else may be said of the absurdity of our institutions and our unenlightened notions, we have the appearance, at least, of a great people. The products of our skill and capital are in every portion of the habitable globe; the business of the world is transacted on the exchange of London; commerce in our ports; science in our factories; activity in our streets, and affluence in our squares; intelligence in our societies, learning in our universities, and eloquence in our senates; affections at our hearths, and piety at our altars; no slight specimens these of the value of our constitution. Would it be too much to say, turning away from these more modest expostulations of a calm and reasoning philosophy, would it be too much to say, that no such magnificent spectacle of the civilization of mankind was ever offered to observation, as is at this day presented to any reflecting mind by this our favoured island? What solution can be found, then, for the restless agitation, and inextinguishable discontent, of too many amongst us? I shall not, I think, employ your time ill, if at the conclusion of this course of lectures, I now endeavour to consider this subject throughly; if I now try to enable you, to the best of my power, to judge of the reasonings of those whom you will have hereafter to meet in public and in private; men not without their importance from their talents or influence from their situation in society. The truth is, that the convulsion to which I have alluded, the Revolution in France, a revolution that ought to be deeply studied by the inhabitants of these kingdoms, produced a ferment in the minds of men which has not yet subsided, and possibly never may. Every such ferment will always give a currency to republican principles: the daring, the low, the ambitious, men of commanding talents, men of

desperate fortune, those who relish not the restraints of order, those who turn from the doctrines of religion, and I mean not to deny, that to these must be often added respectable men of speculative minds, with wide and extended views, and ardently interested in the happiness of their fellow creatures, all these are naturally put in motion when society is disturbed; are always ready to present their projects, and fill the air with their complaints, when an audience can be obtained. Like the winds in the cave of Eolus, no sooner is an interstice opened, than out they come, "Quà data porta, ruunt;" and it were often to be wished, that there was a master spirit, like the fabled God, to control them, and save the world from the uproar they occasion, by restoring them to their appointed place of salutary restraint. Republics have always existed among mankind; they are founded on one of the most essential principles of our nature, the primitive equality of all men; an equality seen in a thousand affecting instances; in our common feelings, appetites, and passions; in the same process of youth, manhood, and decay; in health and sickness common to all; and in the same great undistinguishing law of our being, that consigns to the same common earth the peasant and the king. "And how dieth the wise man?" says the preacher. "As the fool." While these are indisputable truths, and matters of the most obvious experience, the distinctions of society, though equally the result of our common nature, will always be rebelled against, will always be looked upon with an evil eye by those who are placed low in the scale of human existence. Republics are the expedient resorted to, not only for the redress of the inequalities of fortune, and the injustice of the oppressor, but for the fancied evils, and the real inevitable evils, by which a speculative mind is tormented; and a fierce and proud man, and a benevolent and good man, will thus often find an equal pleasure in contemplating a state of society, where all are to be mingled and mixed together, no superior admitted, and all left to participate, in the best manner they can, in the same common privileges and blessings of their common nature. It is thus, that the writings of Greece and Rome, and the minstrels of liberty, have always found an echo in our bosoms, are the delight of our youth, and not ungrateful to our age. "Old as I am," says Mr.

Burke, " I read with pleasure the fine raptures of Lucan and Corneille;" and this sort of elevation of sentiment, this indefinite aspiration after a freedom of will and carelessness of action, which is to give dignity to the character, has been entertained and transmitted through every generation of mankind, from the Roman patriot to the Gothic warrior; from the English baron to the religious puritan; from the republican of America to the revolutionist in France; and finally to those amongst us, the political enthusiasts, who would now destroy our institutions as the vestiges of feudal ignorance and oppression, and elevate us, as they suppose, in the scale of thinking beings, by turning our limited monarchy into a republic. I can hold no parley with vulgar men, who are indifferent to the refinements of society, or ferocious men who recoil not from the horrors of civil confusion; those for whom the imagination has no pleasures, and those who feel not " the compunctious visitings of our nature." I speak to those who mean well though they counsel ill; who pursue a theory reckless of difficulties and the opinions of others; who are enamoured of their own abstract notions of right; who expect a virtue and a reasonableness in others never to be found; who can see no merit in a system where they at the same time see imperfections; who, as moral and political reasoners, are contemptuous, dogmatic, and unaccommodating; who would hazard every thing rather than not reduce the laws and government of their country to some prescribed model of their own formation; and suppose that there is nothing in the world to move the world, but logic and reasoning; to men often hard and repulsive, sometimes, however, benevolent and good, to these I would now address myself, and the points I would wish to carry with them are, as I have already intimated, that they should not be exclusive, not undervalue the blessings they enjoy, not over-estimate the advantages of others; that they should cast an equal eye on the various conditions of society, the various systems of government which the world exhibits; should see, that happiness, human happiness, may be realized under an infinite diversity of forms; and that nations, like individuals, may have often very different tastes and habits, and very different expedients for accomplishing their own particular welfare; and that while great

principles of political happiness may be held up by the philo sopher to the consideration of mankind, each country must be left to the modification, adoption, or even rejection of them, just as their particular opinion directs or situation requires. And entertaining views like these, and wishing them to be entertained by others, the great opponents I have to meet are reasoners of the republican school; every other form of government is, by such men, considered as a perfect insult on the rights of mankind: the most moderate of them can see little merit in any other. Those indeed amongst them, who deserve the name of statesmen, would not, I imagine, advise an established government, like our own, to be immediately pulled down, for the sake of erecting another on the model of the American; but there is a general opinion, not only amongst them but amongst all republican reasoners, that no other but that of America exhibits the perfection of the social system; that no other can be founded on principles strictly rational and just; and that as the world rolls on, and necessarily improves, no other will at length be thought worthy to exist among mankind.

I cannot accede to these opinions; and I shall, therefore, in the remainder of this lecture, and in the whole of the next lecture, endeavour thoroughly to consider such opinions; and more especially, how far they are applicable, drawn as they are from the nature and success of the American republic, to the old established governments of Europe, and more particularly to the constitution of government established in our own country.

The later revolutionists in France, in the years 1792, 1793, and subsequently, carried these republican notions into practice, but with them the experiment totally failed. Not so in America. In America the experiment has hitherto answered, and is, of course, appealed to by all those who would display by contrast the defects and faults of the older governments. This instance must be, therefore, considered. I may say, indeed, in the first place, and in general terms, that it would be somewhat strange, if the advantages of the American system were not accompanied by connected disadvantages; but we will endeavour to ascertain the fact. I will refer to what I consider as proper authorities, and make quotations. This

method may be a little tedious, but it will be the most unobjectionable way of procuring evidence; and the subject is important.

There has been lately published a book by M. de Tocqueville. He is a Frenchman, not of democratic birth, but, I think, of democratic notions, and he goes over to America to judge for himself of the government and its inhabitants. In his introduction he observes, that every thing since the fall of the Roman empire has tended to establish the equality of mankind. He proceeds in a general manner, through the detail, to establish his general statement, casting a rapid glance on the past history of Europe. "The facts," he says, "have been these: the feudal property was broken up; the lower orders, in the shape of churchmen, were assimilated to the men of rank and power; the great barons and the kings weakened each other by their contentions; the commercial men came forward; the men of genius, and again, luxury, war, fashion, passions the most frivolous, passions the most profound, all and every thing tended to impoverish the rich and enrich the poor; every thing to the progress of democracy." And he at last concludes, that the gradual developement of the equality of conditions is the work of Providence; having all the proper signs about it, universality, durability, the failure of all human efforts to resist it, and every thing conspiring to produce it. There is no alternative, therefore, he insists, for existing governments, but to submit and accommodate themselves to this, as they would to any other dispensation of the Creator. He is not satisfied, he could not well be, with the march of democracy in his own country, but America presents to him a specimen of that developement of the principle of equality, at which France is sooner or later to arrive; and he therefore repairs to that country, not merely from curiosity, but to gather up hints for the improvement of the social condition of his own, which is evidently to be rested on, not necessarily the same, but certainly on similar principles of democracy. Such is the account M. de Tocqueville gives of himself and his political sentiments. There seems, therefore, no reason to object to any representations he may make, as coming from one too much inclined to the older school of politics; and considering him, therefore, as a not

unfavourable critic of republicanism, I shall hereafter quote largely from him. And here I have to observe, that already, even in the introduction to M. de Tocqueville's work, I find much to object to. The equality of mankind has been the object, it seems, of Providence for ages; and therefore, democracy is to be established in obedience to the divine will: it is in vain to resist it. This is the sort of reasoning always adopted by revolutionists and republican writers; from the "ça ira" of the blood-stained mobs of Paris, to the necessarian dogmas of M. Thiers and Mignet, the historians of the French Revolution; from the demagogues of our own low press, to the regular reasonings of particular statesmen, and men of property among ourselves. A revolution must roll on; one movement necessarily leads to another; the spirit of the times cannot be resisted; stop, they say, the falls of Niagara with your hand, the ocean with a bulrush; and in this manner they go on, taking every thing for granted, both with regard to the wisdom and the prevalency of their doctrines; coming to a common vote on the part of mankind, of whom they are, forsooth, the representatives, and carrying along with them, too often, the light and superficial mass of gazers and listeners by the very arrogance of their language and ignorant effrontery of their pretensions. But the affairs of mankind, in the mean time, know but little of this concatenated logic, and necessary consequences of irresistible principles. The gradual improvement of mankind, since the dark ages, is not necessarily their progress to democracy, certainly not to equality; the poor must exist as well as the rich, the labouring poor. Communities in the old world, at least, cannot rest their government on the will of the mere numerical majority; the natural rulers of mankind must be found in the aristocracies of birth, knowledge, and affluence, which arise and attend this progress of mankind, on which so much is supposed to depend. One man can never be the same as another, nor by any possible education be made so. These must be the future facts in old countries, whatever may be the generalizing visions of speculative minds. The example of America is no precedent, from the particular nature of the case. Great principles exist, such as are seized upon by abstract reasoners, but they are disturbed, suspended, neutralized, or destroyed by a

thousand accidents: the appearance of a man of genius, of good qualities or of bad; a sudden epidemic, religious or political, in large classes of mankind; Mahomet may start up from the sands of Arabia; Buonaparte from Corsica.

With what a splendid declamation, for instance, as I have in a former lecture observed, would a revolutionary reasoner of this description have delighted himself and others, at the breaking out of the Reformation; with what confidence would he have asserted, that in half a century not a vestige of what he would have called the Roman Catholic superstition would remain; what a magnificent vision would he have exhibited of the progress of truth, the inevitable fall of confessors and priests, the triumph of the freedom of the mind, and the opening glories of the knowledge and happiness of mankind! But in the mean time confessors and priests still exist, and the Roman Catholic religion exists; and yet the freedom of the mind has been established, and the knowledge and happiness of mankind essentially advanced and placed in a state of permanent progress and improvement. That is, philosophers and statesmen will be justified in their reasonings if they will be moderate in their reasonings; not exclusive, not dogmatic; resting something and not too much on the salutary, moral efficacy of great general principles, but making large allowance for what must, to human eyes at least, appear accident and chance; not supposing that the conclusions of their own minds must necessarily be those of all the world beside, present and to come; and above all, not supposing that there is only one road to political happiness, and that, the one they have themselves selected.

Proceeding onward with the book of M. de Tocqueville, it is plain from every page of it, as it is from every page of every other book on the subject of America, that they who speculate on the democratic system, and think of applying it in any respect to their own country, must remember, that this is a principle perfectly intolerant, perfectly merciless to every other; no other is allowed to exist in modification of it, much less in opposition to it it in the slightest particular. Democracy

" sits on a despotic throne,
And reigns a tyrant if it reigns at all."

When the American constitution was first formed, after the conclusion of the revolutionary war with England, every effort was made by Washington and Hamilton to give strength to the general executive government, and to keep the different provincial governments under the control of the general government of the Union; that America might become a great and compact nation, not a loose assemblage of different republics, each providing for its separate welfare, regardless of any other: in every way, it was the aim of those distinguished and wise men to form republics, but not democracies. Washington had suffered many a painful moment; despondency had sometimes even reached his mind, or a melancholy approaching to it, while he observed the unreasonable fancies and the unprincipled selfishness of the popular will, when the presence of the arms of Great Britain was once removed, and the dangers of the contest passed away. Edifying particulars of this kind are to be found in Marshall's Life of Washington, and are sufficiently intimated in the Federalist, a collection of papers that were addressed by Hamilton and his friends to the American people, while the adoption of the constitution was at issue. But Jefferson was their great opponent; and when the constitution was at last accepted by a sufficient majority of the states, the nation soon became divided into two opposite parties, the Federalists and the Anti-federalists; that is, the republicans and the democrats. And what has been the result? Democracy soon began to be popular, and, since the death of Washington, has more and more and more prevailed, till it has become totally triumphant; as must always be the case, when the question is to be referred to the mere majority of a community, told by the head. And thus I arrive at the great leading position which you will bear in mind, while you are considering the government of America, that it produces every good and every evil that can result from the total domination of the majority; the majority told by the head. This total domination of the majority, so constituted, is the solution of all the phenomena, good or bad, attractive or repulsive, that belong to the system. And I must again repeat, that no patriot must urge his country into republican notions and situations, unless he is prepared for the consequences; unless he is content to have every thing hereafter ruled and adjusted by the majority, told by the head.

But of what avail is it, to talk of the good or the evil that may result from this system? No other system is thought lawful. Every other system of government, as I have already mentioned, is denounced as an usurpation and a tyranny; contrary to the rights of man; the produce only of feudal barbarism and injustice. It were to be wished, that these democratic reasoners, in our own country and the rest of the world, would consider for a moment how artificial is the principle which they set up, when they take it for granted that the minority are bound to give way to the majority. It is quite desirable that they should consider, that when this is the case, there is an end of the rights of man for all those who are unfortunately outnumbered. And again, let us look to practice, and reflect how little this celebrated principle is attended to, whenever it can, with any convenience, be resisted. In earlier times, large sections of a nation have moved away to the left, when the larger portion thought it better to move away to the right. How often in ordinary life do we see minorities entering into resolutions, appealing to the public, breaking off from majorities, and insisting, often with just reason, on the superior wisdom of their views! It is evident, that if you resolve every thing into the rights of man, it is the natural right of every man to do what he chooses; certainly not to submit to the physical strength of others, that is, not to the majority numerically counted. This last (however insisted upon by republican philosophers) is mere brutal force, the law of savages.

But society, it will be said, cannot exist, nor the business of life be carried on, except the rule be laid down, that the minority are to submit to the majority. This may be very true; but then we have now another principle produced, not the mere naked rights of man, but the principle of expediency. "It is desirable, it is expedient, that the majority should rule." Where then are the rights of man, where are all the original elementary principles of human nature? "It is expedient," it seems; why we are thus returned to the unenlightened, miserable, and contracted views of our poor, barbarous ancestors, whose acts of parliament generally began, as indeed they do now, with the lowly words, and always with the principle, "whereas it is expedient," &c. &c. and "be it hereafter enacted," &c. &c. Alas for the rights of man and the vapouring dogmatism of the

philosophers of democracy, "quid tanto dignum feret hic promissor hiatu!" so immutable are the constitutions of nature, properly understood; so vain is it for democratic or any other writers to rest government or society upon any other foundations but those which the Creator has appointed for them; so vain to rest every thing on abstractions elicited from the metaphysical recesses of original right, neglecting what is practical, palpable, and intelligible.

But again. While this great principle of the domination of the mere numerical majority is contended for as a natural ordinance, can any possible principle be so contrary to nature as this, that the vote of one man shall be considered just as good as that of another? Is this the ordinance of the Creator? Has he made the conditions of human life every where the same? Is the earth to be tilled, and the web to be woven, and the sea to be encountered, and the ore to be manufactured, by those who are at the same time to enlighten and to improve mankind; to teach the artist the lessons of science, and their fellow creatures their duties to each other and to their God? But no, it will be answered, we mean only to have intelligent votes, given on all public occasions, and up to this point, at least, all men may be educated. Indeed! Are these public occasions, then, so easy to be understood? I speak of old countries, and old governments, situated in Europe. Enter into the streets of our metropolis, or our great manufacturing towns, its by-streets, and its obscure and crowded tenements, not its squares and palaces; survey the inhabitants you find there; observe their occupations and their wants; their necessary habits of thought; and consider what is it, that education can here be rationally expected to accomplish. Consider what public questions are; what the candidates for public favour are; the plausible arts of a designing man; the unattractive, the retiring and often even the fastidious manners of a man of real intelligence and virtue.

But there is no difficulty in all these points, it will be answered, in America. Perhaps not, perhaps not at present. But was ever any country so situated, in the history of the world, as is America? Can it be in any respect an example to any of the old countries in Europe? We will refer to a few particulars. I will quote largely from others that you may not depend

on any opinion of mine; and as I proceed, you will continually compare what you hear, with what you know of your own political situation, and ask yourselves whether your limited monarchy is to be changed to an American democracy; whether it is desirable that such an object should be accomplished at all; and if accomplished, what would be the cost, and what the risk. And I must again, and again observe, that it is in vain for statesmen to suppose that they can adopt a middle course; that they can take as much or as little of democracy as they choose. This cannot be. Mixed governments and monarchical governments cannot be founded on democratic principles. You may rest such governments on aristocratic foundations, and then liberalize the whole by adding and interweaving popular principles: but make the government essentially and fundamentally democratic, and the democratic spirit will, from its very nature, never rest till it has totally overpowered the other two, the monarchy and aristocracy. It behoves therefore every reformer in a mixed government to consider well what he is doing; to consider on what foundation he is resting every thing; what is the moving power; what are the elements of the constitution he is proposing; how these elements are tempered, modified, checked, and harmonized; birth, rank, property, intelligence, physical strength, how all these things are disposed of.

"Many leading remarks," says M. de Tocqueville, "may be made on the social state of the Anglo-Americans; but there is one paramount to all the rest. The social state of the Americans is eminently democratic; it was so from the first: in our own times, it is more so than ever. When one speaks of the laws and civil polity of the Americans, one must always begin with the great doctrine of the sovereignty of the people. This is not a doctrine disguised as in other countries, and leading to no consequences; it is recognised in the manners, it is proclaimed in the laws, and if there be a country where the value of the doctrine may be appreciated, its application to the affairs of society studied, and its advantages and dangers judged of, that country is, most assuredly, America. The people participate in the composition of their laws, by choosing their law-makers; in the application of their laws, by electing their executive officers: and they may be said to

govern themselves, so feeble and limited is the power left to the administration of the laws, so distinct the influence of its popular origin, so obedient is it to the power from which it sprang. The people in America reign in the political world as the Deity does in the universe; the people are the beginning and end of every thing; from them every thing proceeds, and by them is every thing absorbed."

"The institutions of the country," says M. de Tocqueville, in his second volume, "are not only democratic in their principle, but in all their developements; the people nominate directly their representatives, and in general, annually, that they may retain them more completely in their dependence: it is the majority that governs in the name of the people, the majority consisting of peaceable and patriotic citizens. The parties range on each side, and endeavour to bring over to them the moderate, who stand in the middle. These parties were long the federalists and the republicans; but America is the land of democracy. The federalists, though counting in their ranks almost all the great men of the Revolution, were at last obliged to give way; Jefferson and the democrats triumphed, and the society has from that time become democratic. A custom is gaining ground in America, that will, in the end, render all the guarantees of the representative government vain. The electors, when they name a deputy, often trace out for him a line of conduct from which he is not to depart, and except that there is no tumult, it is, as if the majority met and deliberated in the market place."

"Many circumstances," I continue to quote from M. de Tocqueville, "have contributed to render the power of the majority not only predominant, but irresistible: it is not only a power great in fact, but the public opinion is with it, and when it is once formed, this power of the majority, no obstacle can be found, I do not say to stop, but there is none even to retard its march; none even to leave it time to hear the complaints of those whom it tramples down, and crushes as it passes over them. The consequences of a state of things like this, have an ill omen for the future."

M. de Tocqueville, to whose testimony there can be no possible objection, after these observations, proceeds in the next chapter to state the instability of every thing that results

from the manner in which the people can indulge every change in their fancies, by a correspondent change in their representative and executive officers. Schemes for the public good, public institutions, laws, the constitution of the government, every thing is affected by this facility of change; and he at last observes, How is all this? "I rest the origin," says he, "of all power on the will of the people, and yet I regard, as impious and detestable, the maxim that the majority have a right to do what they think best—how is all this? do I not contradict myself? No; for there is a general law, which has been adopted, not only by the majority of the people, but by the majority of the human race; and this law is the law of justice. It is justice, then, that forms the boundary of the right of every people to do what they choose. A nation is like a jury of the human race, and is to apply the law by which it is bound—the law of justice. When I refuse then to obey an unjust law, I appeal from the sovereignty of the people to the sovereignty of the human race." The chapter becomes animated, and he observes, "When then I see a right and a faculty allowed to any power, be it what it may, to do whatever it chooses, be it called people or king, democracy or aristocracy, whether exercised under a monarchy or under a republic, then I say, there is the germ of tyranny, and for my part, I will look for another system of laws under which to live."

M. de Tocqueville seems, therefore, not to acquiesce in the great republican axiom, that every one is to submit to the majority. He leaves them, he runs away—abiit, evasit, erupit. "It is not," says he, "that I object, like other European writers, to the weakness of the American government, I object to its force; not to the extreme of liberty that I find there, but that there is no protection against tyranny. Is any one treated with cruelty and injustice in America, to whom shall he appeal? To the public opinion? It is that, which forms the majority. To the legislative body? It represents the majority, and obeys it blindly. To the executive power? It is named by the majority, and is a passive instrument in its hands. To the public force? Public force is only the majority under arms. To a jury? It is but the majority clothed with the power of pronouncing its decrees. The judges themselves are in some

states elected by the majority; however unjust or unreasonable your treatment, you have no course but to submit. I do not say that, at this present moment, tyranny is frequent in America, but this is owing to circumstances and manners, not to laws."

And finally, he observes, "Suppose now, on the contrary, that you have a legislature, composed in such a manner that it shall represent the majority, but not necessarily be the slave of its passions; an executive power, that shall have a force assigned to it; a judiciary power, independent of both. You will then have a government, democratic indeed, but you will no longer have such grounds to expect tyranny."

These are the objections that are urged by M. de Tocqueville against the American system; and in the last paragraph I have read, you see the remedy which he proposes, and the superior system that he wishes for. But has not M. de Tocqueville in these last few words described the constitution of England? "A legislature," he says, "composed in such a manner that it shall represent the majority, but not necessarily be the slave of its passions; an executive power, that shall have a force assigned to it; a judiciary power, independent of both. You will then have a government, democratic indeed, but you will no longer have such grounds to expect tyranny."

"Consider the nature of freedom of thought," he goes on to say, "it is then, that you will perceive, that the domination of the majority exceeds any domination that is known in Europe. The most absolute princes cannot, with us, prevent the circulation of thought, not even in the very bosom of their courts; and thought, hostile to their authority. But it is not so in America. While it is doubtful what the majority will decide, one may speak, but not a moment longer: the opinion of the majority once known, friends and enemies all follow in the train. No monarch, like a majority, can unite the forces of society, and vanquish every resistance; the one can act upon the conduct only, the other upon the will also. I know no country where there is, in general, less independence of mind, and less real freedom of discussion, than in America. In America a sort of circle is drawn round the thoughts; while within it, a writer is at liberty; but woe to him, who presumes to step beyond it! It is not that he is

to expect an auto da fé, but that he is to be exposed to all sorts of disgusting persecutions from day to day; as a public man every avenue is shut against him, for he has offended the only power that could open a career to him: every thing is closed, even the prospect of fame. Those who differ with him blame him openly, those who think with him say nothing and slink away from him. He yields at last, and gives way, exhausted by continual effort, and sinks into silence as if filled with remorse, that he had spoken the truth. Chains and hangsmen were formally the gross instruments of tyranny, but civilization has, in our days, contrived a despotism far more complete, though tyranny seemed before to have had nothing further to learn."

M. de Tocqueville continues this strain for some time, insisting upon the thraldom in which the human mind is held; that Molière and La Bruyère could indulge in sallies against the court, even in the palace, and in the presence of Louis XIV., but that the slightest criticism sets an American in a flame; that a writer is obliged eternally to offer incense to his countrymen; and that the majority live in a continued state of adoration of themselves. He even attributes the want of distinguished writers to this source. "There can be no genius without freedom of thought, and there is no such freedom in America. There were great men," says he, "during the Revolution, while thought was free, but they exist no more; minds are now reduced all to the same model; the views of all are the same. The courtiers of America do not indeed say, 'Sire,' and 'Your Majesty;' they make it not a question by which of the virtues their prince is most distinguished; they assure their prince (the people) that they are possessed of all; they consign not their wives and daughters to be mistresses to their 'grand monarque,' but they sacrifice their opinions and prostitute themselves. The moralists and philosophers of America no longer present their lessons under the veil of allegory. 'We know,' they say, 'that we speak to a people too elevated above the weaknesses of humanity, not to be always masters of themselves; we should not address a language of our present admonitory nature, were we not addressing men, whose virtues and enlightened minds render them alone of all mankind, worthy to be free.' Could

the flatterers," says he, "of Louis XIV. go beyond this? If liberty is ever to be lost," says he, "in America, the cause will be the domination of the majority; which will hurry minorities into despair and make them appeal to force. Anarchy will ensue, but an anarchy the result of despotism." And at last he quotes Jefferson, as the great apostle of democracy. "The executive power," says Jefferson, "is, in our government not the sole, nor even perhaps the principal object of my anxiety; the tyranny of our legislature is now, and will for some years be, a danger far more formidable: that of the executive power will come in its turn, but at a far distant period."

The chapters from which I have now quoted in the work of Tocqueville describe the great evil of the American system, though I should think with some exaggeration, yet I apprehend with considerable truth, for even the exaggeration indicates a mind exasperated at the case, he sees before him; and the same conclusions may be drawn from the observations of intelligent travellers, and from the confidential letters of men of genius now existing in the country; all of whom feel and lament this tyranny of the majority. To this tyranny of the majority M. de Tocqueville finds a barrier in the lawyers. "The lawyers," says he, "when there is no nobility, no men of letters, and when the people are distrustful of the rich, form the superior political class and the most intellectual portion of society; they can therefore get nothing by change: they are then made conservative, and this is a feeling added to the love of order, which is so natural to them: they are the American aristocracy, and they form the most powerful, and so to speak, the only counterpoise to the democracy." An aristocracy is therefore, it seems, wanted. With this body of men, the lawyers, he seems well pleased. He finds also great safety for America, in the municipal institutions, where democracy may consume its dangerous activity, and where the people may serve a sort of apprenticeship to their republican duties. These municipal institutions he dwells upon at great length, and evidently considers this as one of the most important parts of his work; and so do others.

As far as the great object of his work is concerned, the situation of his own country, his conclusions have a fearful cast —that arbitrary power, the power of one, must be established,

or democracy; he means not necessarily democracy after the exact manner of America, but democracy adapted to existing circumstances; and he does not appear in this last part of his work very distinct and intelligible. He speaks in very general terms, while he talks of applying the democratic principles, he finds in America, to France and the rest of Europe. But it is obvious that while a philosopher speaks in these general terms, he may say what he pleases. Let him specify, and the objections that belong to his views will present themselves —latet dolus in generalibus. But his conclusions, whatever they may be, and his hopes and plans for his own country and the arbitrary governments of the continent, are drawn from premises which we may be thankful are not to be found in our own country of England, and while our constitution is maintained, never will be found. Nor need we fly to any such extremes, as M. de Tocqueville proposes for France and the rest of Europe. But as far as we are concerned, such observations are scattered over the remainder of the work, as we might naturally expect would be made by M. de Tocqueville, and have in fact already been made by all intelligent travellers, who have visited America. I shall proceed to refer to some of these observations: such as I think may give you a general notion of the working of the American system; such as I think may enable you to compare it with your own; and such as may even afford you some instruction with respect to the general principles of government—I shall make a long quotation.

M. de Tocqueville then observes, that "there is no aristocracy in America of any kind, neither political nor intellectual; the people are every where the same; merchants, farmers, all alike; there is no ignorance, and there is no knowledge; the rich indeed separate themselves from the rest and constitute a sort of aristocracy, which is somewhat anxiously maintained. Providence, it is supposed, in America has given to every individual the means of taking care of himself; the texture of society is therefore loose: the father applies this maxim to the son, the master to the servant, the commune to its functionaries, the province to the commune, the states to the provinces, the union to the states; and it is thus extended, and becomes the sovereignty of the people, for they too are to

take care of themselves. In religion, it is the same." All this is very conceivable from the original history of the country; every thing in America is courage and enterprise.

"One may meet," says M. de Tocqueville, "those who have been successively, lawyers, agriculturalists, merchants, ministers of the gospel and physicians; there is no state maxim, no professional prejudice, no system, habit, or method by which the American is bound; not even the ministers of the gospel it seems." The love of change and enterprise never leaves the mind of the American; he carries it with him into his laws, into his religious creeds, into his social habits, and the exertions of his industry; it follows him into his woods, and it is the inmate of his bosom, while surrounded by society; it makes him the swiftest navigator and the most skilful merchant. It is thus that party violence is diminished—the ambition of men is to be rich rather than great. Men of talents convert them to the purposes of getting money; and hence it is owing to the want of good candidates, as well as the want of discernment in the electors, that such vulgar people are seen in public situations."

This point, however, is far more thoroughly discussed in another part of his work, which, on account of its importance and general application, I shall here quote. "There are many," he observes, "who say, that the people may not indeed know how to govern, but that they are very sincere in their wish for good government, and that their instinct never fails to point out to them, those who are animated with the same desire and who are the fittest for power. For myself, says he, "what I have remarked in America authorized no opinion of this kind. I was struck, from the first of my arrival, with surprise, to see how much merit was commonly to be found among the governed, and how little among the governors. It is a constantly recurring fact, that the most distinguished men are, in our days, seldom called to public situations, and one is obliged to confess, that this has been more and more the case, as the democracy has more and more exceeded its former limits. For this, many reasons may be assigned. It is impossible," says he, "do what we will, to elevate the intelligence of the people above a certain level. One may facilitate the acquirement of knowledge, and make it cheap;

still, one cannot make men improve themselves and develop their intelligence, unless they devote their time to the purpose. The necessity, therefore, of more or less labour for their subsistence forms for the people the limit to their intellectual progress: this limit may be more or less distant in different countries; but that it should not exist at all, it would be necessary, that the people should not have to engage in the common business of life; that is, that they should not be people. It is just as difficult to imagine a society, where the people shall be all well informed, as to imagine a state, where all the people shall be rich. They may be sincere in their wish for the public good, they may be more disinterested, but they always want the means of judging properly. What study does it require to know the exact character of a man! what mistakes are made by the wisest! and are the multitude to succeed? They have neither the time nor the means for any task of the kind; they have to judge at the moment, and to seize upon the most striking features; and it is thus that charlatans of every description know best how to succeed with them, and that their real friends for the most part fail: not to mention that it is not always that the democracy wants nothing but the capacity, it sometimes wants a proper disposition to choose people of merit. It is not to be dissembled, that democratic institutions often generate, in a very high degree, the principle of envy in the human heart: these institutions excite and flatter the passion for equality without being always able to gratify it: this equality is continually escaping from the hands, at the moment of seizure, and the people get angry, while pursuing a good, too near not to be estimated, too far removed to be tasted: they are agitated, wearied, and put out of humour. In America, the people do not hate the superior classes, but they show no kindness for them; they like nothing that does not owe its elevation to their own favour. While the natural instincts of a democracy lead the people to keep men of merit at a distance from power, the same instincts equally dispose men of merit to withdraw themselves from attempting a career, in which it is so difficult to be independent or to move without degradation. This is candidly," he adds, " expressed by the chancellor Kent. This celebrated American author, after praising

highly that part of the constitution which gives the nomination of the judges to the executive power—'It is,' says he, 'to be expected, that men, the most proper to fill these situations, would have too much reserve in their manners, and severity in their principles, ever to unite the majority of suffrages in their favour, when the election depended upon universal suffrage.' It is clear to me," says M. de Tocqueville, "that those who look upon universal suffrage as the best means of making the best choice, are in a complete delusion: there are advantages belonging to universal suffrage, but this is not one. When you enter the house of representatives," says M. de Tocqueville, "you are struck with the vulgar aspect of this great assembly; you look in vain for any celebrated men; they are all obscure people, village lawyers, commercial men, even men belonging to the lower classes: in a country, where education is nearly universal, it is said that sometimes they cannot all write correctly. Two steps distant is the hall of the senate, and you there can scarcely see a single person to whom some celebrity does not attach. You have eloquent lawyers, distinguished generals, skilful magistrates, or states men well known; every thing that passes in this assembly would do honour to the first debating assemblies in Europe. Whence this strange contrast? It is," says he, "that one house is elected by direct suffrage, the other by the state legislatures." The reason given here by M. de Tocqueville is no doubt sufficient; and the fact and the reasonings are worthy of our remark. He even thinks that this last mode of election, this indirect or double election, must hereafter be more resorted to, or the American republics will run no small chance of being shipwrecked amid the shoals of democracy; he thinks this the only way of bringing the exercise of political power to the level of all classes of people. And in a subsequent chapter, he considers universal suffrage as in fact investing the poor with the government of society.

Again. "In a democracy," says he, "the love of variety becomes a perfect passion. The frequency of elections causes a constant instability in the laws. 'The instability of our legislature,' says Hamilton, in the Federalist, 'is the greatest blemish in the genius and character of our government.' 'The facility with which our laws are changed,' says Madison,

in the same work, 'appears to me one of the greatest evils to which our system of government is exposed.' 'The instability of our laws,' says even the democratic Jefferson, 'is really a very serious inconvenience; there should be an interval of a year between the presentation of a law and its enactment,' &c. &c."

In the foregoing remarks of M. de Tocqueville, an English reader will see the value of our own institution of the House of Lords, which not only secures a second ordeal, but one generally speaking of superior education and more refined habits, and one by its very nature and constitution set apart from the transitory passions and epidemic movements of the public. That it is hereditary and not responsible, as it is called, constitutes the very essence of its value.

Newspapers, it seems, form the great reading of America; the press is, of course, entirely free; every thing being left to the decision of the majority, it could not be otherwise. There is no difficulty in America, the Americans feeling no interest in their institutions, that is, in their secondary institutions: the government indeed must be republican: this is indeed their first and indispensable principle; but nothing more is necessary, nothing beyond this. M. de Tocqueville, however, is well aware of the difficulty by which this subject, the liberty of the press, is surrounded; he is struck by its virulence in America; so indeed are other travellers; and while discussing the subject very thoroughly, he throws out an observation, which has a sound of melancholy truth, to an European and even to an English ear, "that liberty cannot exist without this freedom of the press, and order scarcely with it." In England we must take our chance, I believe, with such imperfect, because our only expedients, as a law of libel and a jury: it is difficult, it seems, in America to make any laws that shall operate as restraints. "All our crimes," said a gentleman to M. de Tocqueville, "arise from the drinking of spirituous liquors." Why not then put a tax on ardent spirits?" "Our legislators have often thought of it," was the reply; "but the law might cause an insurrection; and certainly all who voted for it would never be again returned."

Democracies are not capable, M. de Tocqueville thinks, of long efforts, and manage foreign concerns ill; on each ac-

count they are unfitted for Europe. M. de Tocqueville is, perhaps, mistaken here; the American ambassadors have been always men of ability and address. But he holds, that the advantages and disadvantages of democratic and aristocratic governments are, that the first can easily repair its faults and has always good intentions, and that the latter has larger views and more legislative wisdom. "The American," observes M. de Tocqueville, "considers every thing as his own work, and is thus rendered quite intolerable in defending every thing in and about his country and her institutions, admitting no evil or defect whatever." All this seems to be quite agreeable to the experience of other travellers. For myself, I have found it, on this account, the most fatiguing thing in the world to talk with an American about his country; no information can be got; he will admit nothing. It is in vain that you make remarks; your own understanding is not of the slightest use to you. One exception only have I met with, a very intelligent man, and tolerably candid. We talked for some time about America; and I at last observed, "The truth is, that government has no difficulties in America, for there is nothing to govern." He smiled, made no reply, and the conversation ended.

Notices of the kind, which I have now selected from the work of M. de Tocqueville, do not show, and are not meant to show, that civil liberty is not a blessing to a people: there is no blessing to be compared to it; but they may show, that men are not to be exclusive and intolerant in their notions of it; and that the democratic government in America, though it is the country to which an appeal is always made by democratic writers, is not necessarily such a perfect model, that every reasonable man in every other part of the world, should set himself immediately to assimilate to it the laws and institutions of his own country. That America is a country where human happiness is diffused and realized to a very extraordinary degree, need not be at all denied; the history of the country and the unparalleled advantage of having wide and untouched tracts of country accessible to the civilized part of it, this forms a sufficient solution for the phenomenon just mentioned, and for the possibility of men subsisting together with that freedom from restraint, which is so delicious to men

of irregular minds and proud and lofty spirit; but it is not at all the less evident on this account, that America is no example for the governments of Europe; governments established in old countries, with no such outlet for their population, and whose inhabitants, not derived from the republican adventurers of Europe, and the puritans and pilgrim fathers of England, have long inherited habits and notions, civil and religious, of a cast totally different; such as could not be reduced to the democratic model, with any chance of permanence or success, and not without the greatest violence offered, even to those principles in the human mind, which it is incumbent upon the most democratic reasoners in common consistency to respect.

I will now turn from this work of M. de Tocqueville, the French observer, and will advert to-morrow to the speeches of Mr. Webster, the great statesman and orator of America, deservedly the pride of his country, and a public man that, from his eloquence and good sense, would be an honour to any country. The two volumes are highly worthy of your attention, and in many passages will, as I conceive, afford no slight illustration of the general doctrines that I am now endeavouring to inculcate. And I must observe at the same time, that it is no meaning of mine to deaden the spirit of civil liberty, I wish only to direct it aright, and to make it more reasonable; and I am not, therefore, at all unwilling that you should hear the panegyrics of the American system, displayed and enforced by the most splendid of the orators which it has produced.

LECTURE V.

AMERICA.

IN the lecture of yesterday I endeavoured to fortify your minds against exclusive systems in politics; against the mistake of supposing that human happiness can only be realized under republican institutions, that no governments are lawful, but those founded on the will of the majority told by the head; and I quoted largely from the late work of M. de Tocqueville to show, that the government of America is not one exempt from its appropriate evils; and that those evils are of a nature and of a magnitude sufficient to prevent any reasonable man from being an undistinguishing worshipper of such constitutions, and from endeavouring to introduce any similar system of republicanism into any of the older countries of Europe, more particularly into our own island, where a mixed system exists, that exhibits a specimen of human civilization, that might well satisfy, and more than satisfy, any intelligent speculator on the institutions of government, and the nature of mankind. And finally I observed, that the instance of America was one unparalleled in the history of the world; and both from the nature of its first settlers, and the particular circumstances in which the population is placed, formed no precedent whatever for the inhabitants of other countries.

In the lecture of to-day, I shall refer to the work of Mr. Webster; and I shall not hesitate to renew the same sort of reasoning, and repeat the same remarks, that I have already made, on the American system. I am naturally anxious, that such as have reference to our own country should find admission into your minds, and remain there for your consideration hereafter; and repetition may be one means among others of producing this effect.

The subject of America is very inexhaustible: no country

can be more interesting, not only from the novelty of the case, but from the high tone of civil and religious liberty which is there maintained, and from the example for imitation that is supposed to be there exhibited, for every other portion of mankind. It is to this last particular, this example, that I chiefly direct my attention. The manners, the morals, the religious sects, with these I do not concern myself, they are naturally the topics adverted to by our own travellers; and such subjects as I am discussing will also be found in their pages, especially in the very reasonable work of Mr. Hamilton, "Men and Manners in America." But I do not refer to the accounts that they have given; I confine myself to the French traveller, and the American orator, because to their representations, as not arising from any feelings, connected with this country, there can be no possible objection, and any conclusions, that can be fairly deduced from them, must be considered as decisive.

I observed at the end of my last lecture, that it was no meaning of mine, to deaden the spirit of civil liberty; that my wish was only to direct it aright and make it reasonable; that I was not therefore unwilling that you should hear the panegyrics of the American system, displayed and enforced by the most splendid of the orators which it has produced. These panegyrics will be abundantly found in every part of these two volumes of Mr. Webster's Speeches; and they will at all events animate the mind to a due sense of the value of civil liberty, and of the extraordinary state of personal independence and prosperity in which every individual in America does, or at least may exist. But the question to which I am all along inviting your attention is this:—How far the American system can be realized in an old European country, and how far, even in this new country of America, certain evils are not experienced, which would be of fearful import indeed, if any system was adopted which would introduce them into the communities of Europe.

Observe, for instance, many passages in the preface to the second volume, as given by the American editors of the work. "Our government," they say, "popular in its theory, popular in its conception and in the rightful action of the system, is still more popular in its actual operations. This being the

case, flattery of the people is not merely the demagogue's accustomed theme, but the temptation to espouse popular prejudices, to inveigh against even just exercises of constituted power, to disparage institutions, and to court temporary opinions, is too strong to be resisted, except by firmly balanced minds, warmed with a true patriotism. It will accordingly be found, that this is the path to advancement most frequently pursued: the people have been most flattered by those, who have most systematically and boldly assailed all those constitutional safeguards, originally devised to protect the people from the abuses of executive power. So artfully contrived is this plan of popularity, that the real friend of the people, the friend of the constitution and the laws, in which the safeguard of their liberties exists, is apparently thrown upon unpopular ground, and compelled at times to resist their own hasty co-operation, in measures resulting in their own injury. The discharge of this duty, in which the very heroism of politics consists, is the touchstone of the statesman; and in nothing do Mr. Webster's public character and course of political conduct, appear in so noble and commanding a light. On all occasions he has been the great champion of the constitution and laws, the supporter of the institutions of the country, and of its great fundamental interests; and from his first appearance in public life to the present day, his writings may be searched in vain for a single attempt to play the demagogue; and yet who could have played it, we were about to say, with a better right? Who could have played it with a better pretence? Why are not the catchwords of a false and party republicanism for ever on his lips? Why does he not throw himself into the circle of those who are stimulating and leading on the people to a mad crusade against the people's constitution and laws? Is he so blind as not to see that that way lies the road to honour, office, and power? Is he so wanting in discernment, that he wanders from this path through ignorance? Are there so few examples to guide his choice? Not so. Mr. Webster is a patriot: he would find no pleasure in influence and place, obtained by fomenting prejudices, by sowing alienation and hatred among the members of the community, by exciting the people to tear down the fabric of their own liberty, and by making the institutions odious in which it is organized,

and so to say, enshrined. It is not merely that his understanding is too just and manly to adopt and repeat these odious sophistries; but his moral sense revolts from them, as mean and treacherous. The people, we apprehend," say the American editors, "do too little justice to such a course, and do not sufficiently consider how much they owe to such a man. Suppose the power which Mr. Webster has employed to sustain and build up, had been exerted to subvert and destroy, should we have stood where we now stand? And if the country still stands unshaken on its foundations, the people should understand that they owe it partly to the irresistible power of argument, the noonday light of illustration, which have been shed upon the great principles of the constitution, in the late fearful crisis. That we have yet a country, to be the subject of these desolating experiments, is in no small degree owing to the ability, with which they have been exposed and counteracted."

We have here, you see, in the preface of these American editors, many of the objections that have been always urged against government founded on a popular basis, fully exemplified; and they must be taken into account, whenever we think of assimilating our own governments to the American model. How far these editors may be consistent in their reasoning, or justified in their panegyrics, by the facts of the case, is not the question; it is the nature of the reasoning, the influence, and practices of demagogues, that are here supposed, it is these that we are to remark, the evils that have always been considered as necessarily belonging to all republican governments.

And turning now to the work itself, many notices may be found in these two volumes of Mr. Webster, that would give information with respect to the American constitution, and instruction with respect to our own. They abound indeed in every page; and soberly considered, and in the equal, general, and tolerant spirit, which it is the business of these two lectures to recommend, none can be more edifying. The American orator has indeed no notion of any freedom, but on his own republican or rather democratic model; but you, it is to be hoped, may have views less exclusive, and more adapted to the real and practical condition of the world; and

reading in this latter spirit, it is only with pleasure that we can peruse his panegyrics on his countrymen and the constitution of America; their past struggles, their heroism, and intelligence, and the unbounded prospect of their growing prosperity. On every account, and at every moment of our perusal of the work, we can have pleasure in observing the triumphant statements of the orator, with regard to the happiness of his countrymen. What alone I wish, in the mean time, to observe, is, that it is a species of prosperity and happiness, which cannot be realized, or reasonably attempted, in the old governments of Europe.

These volumes open, with a discourse, delivered at Plymouth, in commemoration of the first settlement of New England; and it is of course, like the orations of Pericles to the Athenians, a defence and eulogium of the constitution of the country. "Let us rejoice," says the orator, "that we behold this day; auspicious (indeed, bringing happiness beyond the common allotment of Providence to men, full of present joy, and gilding with bright beams the prospect of futurity), is the dawn that awakens us to the commemoration of the landing of the pilgrims. For ever honoured be this, the place of our fathers' refuge! for ever remembered the day, which saw them, weary and distressed, broken in every thing but spirit, poor in all but faith and courage, at last secure from the dangers of wintry seas, and impressing this shore with the first footsteps of civilized man!" The panegyric, which the subsequent pages contain, is a noble specimen of laudatory eloquence; but at present I concern myself with such paragraphs as directly or indirectly may be edifying to ourselves.

"Of our system of government (the American)," observes the orator, "the first thing to be said is, that it is really and practically a free system: it originates entirely with the people, and rests on no other foundation than their assent." This is, as you may remember, the leading observation of M. de Tocqueville; a government that rests on the will of the majority, the majority told by the head: this is, you are aware, the great republican boast; intimating that no other system is a free one, no other legal in its origin, no other worthy of the intelligence of enlightened men. This doctrine per

vades the whole of these volumes; and, indeed, the volumes and speeches of every American, and of every republican writer or statesman. To this democratic axiom I have already objected. I consider it entirely unfounded in the nature of things. I consider our own notions, of the existence of a legal aristocracy, of its influence under all its appearances of birth, rank, property, and intelligence, as far more agreeable to the nature of things, as far more fitted to build up the fabrics of human happiness among communities of human beings. And, in confirmation of what I am now saying, and leaving you to apply what I shall now quote from Mr. Webster, to our European systems, observe, what a sensible man like this cannot but say, in the midst of his democratic maxims, on the very important subject of property.

"There is a natural influence," says he, "belonging to property, whether it exists in many hands or few; and it is on the rights of property, that both despotism and unrestrained popular violence ordinarily commence their attacks. A republican form of government rests not more on political constitutions, than on those laws which regulate the descent and transmission of property. Governments, like ours," says he, "could not have been maintained, where property was holden according to the principles of the feudal system; nor, on the other hand, could the feudal constitution possibly exist with us. The situation of our New England ancestors demanded a parceling out and division of the lands; and this necessary act fixed the future frame and form of their government. Universal suffrage," he afterwards observes, "could not long exist in a community, where there was great inequality of property: the holders of estates would be obliged, in such cases, either in some way to restrain the right of suffrage, or else, such right of suffrage would long before divide the property: in the nature of things, those who have not property and see their neighbours possess much more than they think them to need, cannot be favourable to laws made for the protection of property: when this class becomes numerous, it grows clamorous; it looks on property as its prey and plunder; and it is naturally ready at all times for violence and revolution. "Life," says he, in another passage, "and personal liberty, are no doubt to be protected by law; but property is also to be protected by law, and is the fund out of which the means for protecting life

and liberty are usually furnished. We have no experience, that teaches us, that any other rights are safe, when property is not safe: confiscation and plunder are generally, in revolutionary commotions, not far before punishment, imprisonment, and death."

At the end of the first volume there is a curious passage in this strain, which has a reference to ourselves. "If the property," says he, "cannot retain the political power, the political power will draw after it the property. If Orator Hunt and his fellow labourers should by any means obtain more political influence in the counties, towns, and boroughs of England, than the Marquis of Buckingham, Lord Stafford, Earl Fitzwilliam, and the other noblemen and gentlemen of great landed estates, these estates would inevitably change hands: at least, so it seems to us. And therefore, when Sir Francis Burdett, the Marquis of Tavistock, and other individuals of rank and fortune, propose to introduce into the government annual parliaments and universal suffrage, we can hardly forbear inquiring whether they are ready to agree, that property should be as equally divided as political power; and if not, how they expect to sever things, which to us appear so intimately connected." So much for the subject of property.

And now, with respect to another, not entirely uninteresting to us,—The existence of two houses of legislature; and whether they are to be of the same nature, or not; and what may be the office of the superior, as it may be called. A question arose in the state, to which Mr. Webster belonged, whether senators (the members of the second house in America) were to be chosen according to the population, or according to the taxable property. This gave occasion to the following, among many other important remarks:—"Legislative bodies," says he, "naturally feel strong, because they are numerous and because they consider themselves as the immediate representatives of the people; they depend on public opinion to sustain their measures, and they undoubtedly possess great means of influencing public opinion. With all the guards, which can be raised by constitutional provisions, we are not likely to be too well secured against cases of improper or hasty and intemperate legislation. If we look through the several constitutions of the states, we shall perceive that

generally the departments are most distinct and independent when the legislation is composed of two houses, with equal authority, and mutual checks. If all legislative power be in one popular body, all other power, sooner or later, will be there also. The Senate is not to be a check on the people, but on the House of Representatives. It is the case of an authority, given to *one* agent, to check or control the acts of *another*. The people, having conferred on the House of Representatives, powers, which are great and from their nature liable to abuse, require for their own security another house, which shall possess an effectual negation on the first. If it be wise to give one agent the power of checking or controlling another, it is equally wise, that there should be some difference of character, sentiment, feeling, or origin in that agent, who is to possess that control; otherwise, it is not at all probable that this control will ever be exercised. And the great question," says he, "in this country has been, where to find or how to create this difference, in governments entirely elective and popular." Mr. Webster then enumerates the various expedients that have been resorted to, in the different states of America. The difficulty is evidently very great, or rather, on the American system of representation, quite insuperable; for, on their constant system of representation, how can this sort of independent second house, that is wanted, be created? The whole passage, and this whole speech, illustrates the indispensable value of our own House of Lords, which is just the sort of second assembly that he in vain requires.

Another subject, too, occurs to ourselves of the greatest importance, whether the representative is to be merely a delegate or not. Mr. Webster opened his speech on the Tariff Bill, with observing, "that the subject was surrounded with embarrassments." He enumerates some, and then adverts to a particular one, and it is this: "Different members," says he, "of the senate have instructions, which they feel bound to obey and which clash with one another. We have this morning seen an honourable member from New York (an important motion being under consideration), lay his instructions on the table, and point to them, as his power of attorney, and as containing his directions for his vote." The fact thus

stated by Mr. Webster, leads to no remark on the absurdity (an inevitable one on the American system of delegation), the absurdity of having a question decided by the constituents at one end of a country and afterwards debated at the other. Of what use were Mr. Webster's reasonings and eloquence addressed to those, who in the first place had to lay their instructions on the table? The attempt by our own democratic electors to turn our representation into a system of delegation has been always very properly and constitutionally resisted, by men of any sense or spirit. It is extremely to be lamented, that very dishonest sacrifices are so often made to preserve a seat: and again, it is to be remarked, that the lower the suffrage, the more frequently will such sacrifices be both required and made. A member suffering himself to be so influenced, whatever he may suppose, as far as his opinion is warped by such considerations, as the security of his seat, violates his duty both to his country and to his constituents. There is a beautiful and decisive train of reasoning on this subject, in one of Burke's speeches at Bristol.

Again. The subject of parties and party spirit occurs; another subject of great importance to us. In the eulogium of Washington, Mr. Webster refers to the president's farewell exhortations against the excesses of party spirit. "'A fire,' said Washington, 'not to be quenched;' he yet conjures us (says Mr. Webster) not to fan and feed the flame." There is some difficulty, no doubt, in the question, but it has been discussed with his usual ability, by the same philosophic statesman Mr. Burke, in his "Thoughts on the present Discontents," and I think very properly adjusted. Parties cannot possibly be avoided in a free state; and they must be adopted, under the limitations and in the spirit which Mr. Burke describes. Men of talents and virtue must engage in parties and form a portion of them; but then, they ought to make it their province to influence them, to direct, rather than be dragged along with them. But the observation of Mr. Webster is very striking and valuable: "Party spirit," he remarks, "acting *on* the government, is dangerous enough; but acting *in* the government, it is a thousand times more dangerous: the government, then, becomes nothing more

than organized party; and, in the strange vicissitudes of human affairs, it may come at last to exhibit the singular paradox of government itself, being in opposition to its own powers; at war with the very elements of its own existence. Such cases are hopeless. As men may be protected against murders, but cannot be guarded against suicide; so government may be shielded from the assaults of external foes, but nothing can save it, when it chooses to lay violent hands on itself." Certainly, as Mr. Webster observes in another passage, the preservation of the government, that is of the constitution, is mainly committed to those who administer it.

Again. Those political reasoners are grievously mistaken, who suppose that the American constitution has not, like every other free constitution, its difficulties and dangers. The second volume contains a very remarkable speech from Mr. Webster on the 12th of October, 1832, a period when America was agitated by the Tariff question. In this speech, he goes through a regular critique on every proceeding of the government, making his objections and finding fault, and on the whole, leaving an impression on the mind of an European reader, that in governments, as in poetry, and whether on this side the Atlantic or the other,

> " Whoe'er expects a faultless piece to see,
> Thinks what ne'er is, nor was, nor e'er will be."

" The resolutions," he begins, " which have been read from the chair express the opinion, that the public good requires an effectual change in the administration of the general government, both of measures and of men. In this opinion I heartily concur." And afterwards, he goes on to say, " I declare that, in my opinion, not only the great interests of the country, but the constitution itself is in imminent peril; and that nothing can save either the one or the other but that voice which has authority to say, to the evils of misrule and misgovernment, Hitherto shall ye come, but no further. The constitution itself is but the creation of the public will, and in every crisis which threatens it, it must owe its security to the same power to which it owes its origin.

" The power of the veto," said Mr. Webster, " is exercised

not as an extraordinary, but as an ordinary power; as a common mode of defeating acts of congress, not acceptable to the executive. We hear one day, that the president needs the advice of no cabinet, that a few secretaries or clerks are sufficient for him; the next, we are informed, that the supreme court is but an obstacle to the popular will; and the whole judicial department, but an encumbrance on government: and while, on one side, the judicial power is thus divided and denounced, on the other side arises the cry, 'Cut down the senate;' and over the whole at the same time prevails the loud avowal, shouted with all the lungs of party strength and party triumph, that the spoils of the enemy belong to the victors. This condition of things, this general and obvious aspect of affairs, is the result of three years' administration, such as the country has experienced." The speech then proceeds through thirty pages to remark upon the principles and policy of this administration; how hostile they have been to the great interests of the country; how dangerous to the constitution and union of the States.

I have no doubt that there is a great deal of party politics in the animadversions of Mr. Webster; and on that account the speech might, at first sight, seem not deserving of our notice; but on another account it appeared to me, when I first read it, what it now appears to me, on a second perusal, as in every respect worthy of attention; not indeed on account of the question at issue, the merits of the administration, but because it shows the loose texture of this great republican government, and ought to operate as a warning to all those, who can approve of no other; who would introduce no other; and think no other, but one founded on similar democratic principles, an improvement of their own.

The observations of the French traveller, M. de Tocqueville, on the very democratic nature of the American constitution and the tyranny of the majority, are sufficiently countenanced by passages in the speeches of Mr. Webster: "Sir," says he, "those who espouse the doctrine of nullification reject, as it seems to me, the first great principle of all republican liberty; that is, that the majority must govern. This is a law imposed upon us, by the absolute necessity of the case. We hear loud and repeated denunciations against what is called

majority government. Do gentlemen wish to establish a *minority* government? Look to South Carolina at the present moment: how far are the rights of minorities there respected? I confess, Sir, I have not known, in peaceable times, the power of the majority, carried with a higher hand, or upheld with more relentless disregard of the rights, feelings and principles of the minority; a minority, embracing, as the gentleman will himself admit, a large portion of the wealth and respectability of the state. How is this minority, how are those men regarded? They are enthralled and disenfranchised by ordinances and acts of legislature; subjected to tests and oaths, incompatible with those already taken; they are proscribed and denounced, as recreant to duty and patriotism, and slaves to a foreign power. Both the spirit that pursues them, and the positive measures which emanate from that spirit, are harsh and proscriptive beyond all precedent within my knowledge, except in periods of professed revolution." Such is the language of Mr. Webster, analogous to that of M. de Tocqueville. The will of the majority is proclaimed by Mr. Webster to be the only possible government, and yet the tyranny of the majority is admitted and denounced. Certainly if it be *ever* so great as it is here represented to be in a public speech by so distinguished a statesman, it must be always too great; and the question with which we have next concern, is not, whether majorities are, or are not, to decide, but how those majorities are constituted; for if majorities are to be constituted of the people told by the head, the question is then reduced to one of mere physical force, and we return to the original state of savage and uncultivated man. This is so true, that at this moment, in case of material opposition of opinion, there is no resource in America but civil war, or a disunion of the States, a breaking up of the general government. The same too in any of the state governments,—civil war, or a new constitution, or revolution.

But the whole secret of the prosperity of America, and the possibility of the existence of a form of government so fundamentally democratic, lies in the single circumstance of its being a new country; and its prosperity cannot at all be drawn into a precedent for any old country. Observe the

remarks of Mr. Webster to his countrymen in June, 1833, and let any rational man reflect, how far such remarks can be applied to any other country, in the compass of the whole world, but the singular country of America. "Our political institutions," says he, "place power in the hands of all the people. To make the exercise of power in such hands salutary, it is indispensable that all the people should enjoy, first, the means of education, and second, the reasonable certainty of procuring a competent livelihood by industry and labour. These institutions are neither designed for, nor suited to, a nation of ignorant paupers. To be free, the people must be intelligently free; to be substantially independent, they must be able to secure themselves against want, by sobriety and industry; to be safe depositaries of political power, they must be able to comprehend and understand the general interests of the community, and must have a stake themselves in the welfare of that community. The activity and prosperity, which at present prevail among us, as every one must notice, are produced by the excitement of compensating prices to labour; and it is fervently to be hoped, that no unpropitious circumstances and no unwise policy may counteract this efficient cause of general competency and public happiness."

Now, can it be for a moment supposed, that a reasoner, like this, would contend, in any country but his own, in any part of the continent of Europe or even in England, for majorities numerically counted, and universal suffrage? Would he for a moment imagine, that an European society could be put into such a situation, as he describes; "where every man should have compensating prices for his labour; where all the people should enjoy first the reasonable certainty of procuring a competent livelihood by industry and labour; secondly, the means of education, and be able to comprehend and understand the general interests of the community:"—a community, it must be remembered, placed, not as in America, alone in the midst of the Atlantic Ocean, but in the midst of the other communities of Europe, and within the reach of the influence of the mistakes and follies of every one of them; and not, with wide tracts of fresh land, behind the population, ready to receive them, but in countries already occupied and

peopled for the last thousand years on regular systems of feudal rights and unequal property. Mr. Webster may exult in the happiness and prosperity of his own country; and when he sees with what an unexampled absence of restraint this happiness and prosperity are accomplished, he may indulge the natural pride of his patriotism and look down on the different systems of Europe, as comparatively inferior and likely to be sooner or later assimilated to his own model:— all this may be natural in him; but it is for the statesmen and philosophers of our old world to observe the essential differences of the cases before them, and not to wish for impossibilities.

Republican institutions and a system totally democratic may be possible in a new country, where the first settlers were originally republicans, with high-wrought religious feelings, and where the land was almost equally divided; but this forms no precedent for other countries. Republics may be very favourable specimens of government with some men, but not necessarily with others. The civilization of Europe began with republican institutions, those of Greece and of Rome; the great principles of civil liberty were thus immortalized: but surely it must be thought that those communities exhibited but very imperfect specimens of human happiness; not to mention that a portion of their population, analogous to what in modern language is called the lower orders, consisted of men that were positively slaves. All the great difficulties of modern government were thus avoided; but at what a price? By an outrage of every feeling of humanity, and surely a defiance of the rights of man, and all the elementary principles of democracy. The Spartans might comb their hair, if in the mean time the Helotes were their slaves. We have it upon high authority, that "the poor shall never cease from out the land." No society can exist without labourers; men doing the drudgery of life; men cultivating land, not their own; men with little or no education, and without property. Good men and benevolent institutions may exert themselves very usefully and laudably, but can never so succeed, in an old country, as to make the vote per head consistent with the security of property.

Very serious disadvantages are inseparable from republican systems, and have been always noted by all political writers:

—they are evidently not escaped even in America. But whatever be the advantages by which these disadvantages are accompanied in America, the advantages are to us, in Europe, inaccessible, if the prior history of our communities be attended to. The Grecian and Roman republics declined and fell; the former after being the scene of eternal discord and confusion, and the latter after being, also, the tyrant and oppressor of the world. The northern nations rushed in; the feudal system was established; the distinctions of high and low, and the inequality of property, were thoroughly interwoven and engrafted on our systems of polity. These are the facts; and these distinctions, this inequality, we cannot now obliterate and cast aside: nor can our governments be placed upon any such democratic foundations as exist in America, without such a disorganization of society, and such a fierce and bloody domination of the multitude, as would do more than renew the dreadful scenes, that were so long witnessed during the fall of the Roman empire.

But even turning away from our prior history, and considering merely the nature of man, it is quite clear, that, whatever may have taken place in America, from its singular origin of the pilgrim fathers and republican adventurers taking possession of a new country, the distinctions of society have always existed in other countries and become more and more inevitable and more and more distinctly marked, as a community grows older. The individuals naturally and necessarily fall into different aristocracies of birth; of property, landed, commercial, and manufacturing; of science; of knowledge civil or religious; and the members of these aristocracies are the natural rulers of society, not the mere numerical majority.

The original equality of man belongs to his awful relations to the Deity, the great Creator of the world, seen in the inevitable changes of his being and the events of his existence; in his birth, his growth, his decline, his diseases, and his death; in his appetites, affections, pleasures and pains; in his moral and religious duties; in his hopes of an hereafter, and his obedience to his God: in these great, paramount, and mysterious respects, we are all equal; but in no other. In our relations to each other, as the members of a civil community, all personal equality disappears. We are differently constituted; we come into a community under different cir-

cumstances of birth and natural endowments—different relations, different duties and necessities, different opportunities for good or for evil arise: and all that can be done for the original equality of man, his equality in the eyes of his Creator, is, to allow every man, as far as law and civil ordinances are concerned, to do what he thinks good, if he do it without injury to others. No other equality but this sort of equality is possible: this civil and personal equality may be carried in America, to an extent totally unprecedented in the history of mankind, and may present, in some most important respects, a most imposing and even enviable spectacle of civil society; but it is one, for the reasons I have mentioned, totally unattainable by the rest of the world.

It is indeed so totally unattainable, that the agitators of society appear to me, to give men of any discernment, who have at all reflected on the nature of human affairs, full warning of their intentions. Let the writings and reasonings of such men be considered, and it will be found that, in France, those, who are favourable to republican institutions, notwithstanding the comparative equality of fortune in that country and the great subdivision of the land, still, never think of proposing a scheme of republican government, without at the same time looking to the destruction of religious establishments and an entire change of manners and social habits. Even the common principles of morals are to suffer the same fate. And it is the same in this country. So was it, at the breaking out of the first French Revolution. The system of Mr. Godwin appeared among us, obtained an audience, and established a school. Again in France, at a subsequent period, the St. Simonians. All these belong to the same description of reasoners; men who, though advancing to different stages of absurdity, are all animated (the best of them) in the most unjustifiable degree, with their particular theories; and who, in pursuit of those theories and intoxicated with any power they may acquire, are not to be stopped by any considerations from asserting it; by no future consequences, no probable mischief, no possible ruin.

But another school, and one within the reach of the respect of mankind, has of late become fashionable, not only in France but in this country; those who propose to place the

power of the state, by means of political institutions, formed with that view, in the hands of the middle classes, the traders, farmers, and higher artificers: and this system is considered as both just and necessary on account of the dissemination both of capital and knowledge which has already and may be expected still further to take place, from the gradual progress of the prosperity of the world. To this system it is not the business of these two lectures to object, any further than as it is applied to our own country of England. It is a system of republicanism, but republicanism only; it is not democracy; it is the republicanism that has more or less, and under different modifications and intermixtures of aristocracy, existed in particular portions of Europe; it is the republicanism which probably Washington, certainly Hamilton, would have wished for America; it is not the sweeping and unqualified democracy which Jefferson and the natural tendency of things introduced into that country. But in the science of government every thing is a question of degree. There is no need of any exclusive system of this kind with us: those of our politicians who mean well should take care that they are not drawn aside too far by its captivating pretensions.

Our middle classes can surely have their proper weight and influence (of this there can be now no fear), without monopolizing the powers of the state; and something more may be, and has been, accomplished by our constitution than what can ever arise from the domination of the middle classes. I am approaching too near the politics of the day; and this is what I am always desirous of avoiding: and through these two lectures, and at all times, I am only anxious to throw out those general principles which I think are worthy to influence the mind and feelings of a rational Englishman.

In politics, every thing, as I have said, is a question of degree. Those who insist upon the government of the middle classes would probably make a very objectionable definition of the middle classes: not to mention that, in the present condition of the world, republicanism invariably ends in democracy. The very fact that a country has very large towns and great seats of manufacturing industry, where the means of subsistence of the lower classes are fluctuating and

uncertain, quite unfits it for democratic institutions. And what are we to say, if to such circumstances be added the existence of great inequalities of property in other parts of the same country; and again, a very peculiar species of property resulting from a national debt? Even Mr. Jefferson himself, in his letters from Paris, and in other parts of his Memoirs, frequently alludes to this impediment, in old countries, to what he supposes to be political freedom. He had a horror of the mobs of large capitals; M. de Tocqueville has similar apprehensions; and we already see mobs at New York and Philadelphia. What are we to conjecture of the future? The advocates for republicanism in our old countries would find nothing to sanction their views, but every thing the contrary, in the writings of Mr. Jefferson, as I showed in a separate lecture, when the work first came out.

But still, it will be contended, that though we turn not our governments into democracies or republics, we may at least place them under the influence of public opinion. To this it must be observed, in the first place, that no doubt regular governments are too much disposed to be indifferent to public opinion. This is never wise, nor even just; but it is the most difficult point of all others for the rulers of such governments to ascertain when they are to concede to it, and when to resist. Arbitrary governments remain in the one extreme; democracies rush into the other. The only rule that can be proposed is, that rulers should take what care they can, to have reason on their side: this was the great characteristic of Washington. He viewed the subject on all sides, and then, in the first place, put himself in the right; after this, he calmly stood the consequences, and he and his character always survived the storm.

But, having made these preparatory remarks, I must observe, that though the opinion of the public is a very popular phrase, and the influence which ought to belong to it is loudly contended for, still it must be allowed that it is a phrase which, in every word of it, admits very different meanings. What, for instance, is meant by the public; how far the opinion is ascertained; what is the influence required; these are matters of explanation and doubt; but one thing is certain, and one observation, which I have already made, I

must now leave with you, and it is this, that no government in which monarchy is to have any part can be placed upon republican foundations; that the edifice would necessarily, in that case, be tottering and unstable. See what the Constituent Assembly, by a mistake of this kind, have made of the French monarchy; they abolished the right of primogeniture, weakened or destroyed its aristocratic elements, and what has it ever since become? What is it at this moment? But on the contrary, if a government be first placed on aristocratic foundations, democratic institutions may be then introduced with the happiest effect, and give air and light to the building; and therefore in every mixed government, and in every government, the pretences and proposals of republican politicians must be carefully watched. There is nothing that it is so impossible to satisfy as the spirit of democracy; nothing so encroaching, exclusive, and unreasonable; nothing so faithless: an end accomplished, it is immediately said, that this was only a means to some further end; and the democratic spirit always supplies a succession of those who press on to trample down those before them. Look at the instance of the progress of democracy in the first great revolution of France; still more in the instance of America; for in this last case, nothing can in the slightest manner be pretended in the way of explanation or apology. What was the fact? It was in vain that the great man of the country, their justly adored Washington, it was in vain that, with the assistance of other wise and distinguished men, he laboured to make the general government strong; to introduce into the republican system as much executive power as possible, to keep the union firm, and render it respectable in the eyes of Europe, while America herself might be the better saved from the sins that naturally beset all republican systems; nothing could properly tame or abash the democratic spirit; and it is now entirely triumphant: every thing is left to rest on the decision of the mere numerical majority, and the system is apparently, and on the surface at least, quieted; but it is only so, because the spirit of democracy can descend no lower, and can have nothing further to require, from the mere physical impossibility of collecting the people into a plain, and consulting them at every sunrise.

The American people are a great people, orderly and religious, exhibiting a high spirit of civil and religious liberty. The republican character has great qualities, but it has important faults; it displays the severer virtues, but not the softer; it may be admired, but cannot easily be loved; it is courageous, enterprising, hardy and independent, manly and erect; but it is fierce, selfish, intractable, assuming and opiniated, hard and arrogant: and if we cast a general glance over the northern continent of America, the great leading description of the people, more particularly in the northern and eastern states, will seem to be, that they are the children of Mammon. They may have the merits, and they may attain to the happiness of those who are every moment engaged in the successful pursuit of worldly prosperity; but speaking generally of the people, they think of nothing else; every thing with them is business; there is among them nothing of the poetry of life. This is no very elevated character. And if we turn to the south and the west, what are we to say of the cruelties of the slave states, or the vulgar coarseness of the Vals of the Mississippi; cruelties, far beyond the common tyrannies of slaveholders; coarseness, far more revolting than the rudeness of uncivilized man. Of course, from the midst of this disagreeable mass, individuals will arise, distinguished by all the intelligence and refinements of the most perfect character in European society, but I speak of the whole people, as every where to be seen and found; and much in the same way, I must observe, as I should have to speak of ourselves, if it were not for the aristocratic influences that every where circulate among us, surely to the extreme improvement and civilization of the whole.

A love of civil liberty is an ennobling principle, and one of the highest attributes of the human character, when it is really founded on a sympathy with the feelings of those below us, and on a generous indignation at the selfishness of the oppressor; but when it is in itself only selfishness, when it is mere personal pride, when it is a mere impatience of restraint, it is but the virtue of the savage, who, the moment he is interfered with, tomahawks the offender.

And now, finally, and to advert to one subject more, the restiveness of the Americans on all subjects of executive

government. They are in an eternal alarm lest tyranny should approach them, after the manner, as they think, of European governments; and this idle fear has always been and ever will be the great difficulty and danger which the general government of America has to encounter.

The permanency of the American constitution has always been a matter of speculation and doubt. Indeed to all institutions of a republican nature, instability has been at all times the objection; resting on the good will of the people, their existence is naturally supposed to be feverish and uncertain; and a serious advantage is justly thought to be obtained, when such democratic materials as those of which they are composed, are pressed down by a monarchy and aristocracy, and prevented from starting from their appointed places.

Reflections of this kind were made forcibly to occur to the minds of all reasonable men in Europe, by the alarming transactions that took place during the late American war in 1812, and again still more by those, that lately took place on the subject of the Tariff. "During that war," said Jefferson, "four of the eastern states were only attached to the union, like so many inanimate bodies of living men;" and lately the subject of the Tariff occasioned the most violent agitation, and produced all the appearances of an approaching civil war. The fact was, that the influence of the northern states had prevailed so far as to carry a measure, placing a duty, amounting, in respect of some articles, almost to a prohibition, on British goods, of which the great consumption is in the southern states, and that this prohibition was intended for the encouragement of the manufactures of the north. But the measure was held by South Carolina to be partial and oppressive, and so destructive to its interests and those of the southern states, that it threatened in fact open rebellion, and to break up the union, rather than submit. This question gave occasion to some of the most eloquent and able of the speeches of Mr. Webster, a member from the north. I do not now enter into the subject of the Tariff, and I may not agree with the opinions of Mr. Webster, as a political economist, but I can perfectly sympathize with his animated effusions, on the subject of the permanency of the federal union.

The maintenance of this federal union has been always the great difficulty in the American constitution. Provision was made to meet this difficulty by Franklin, and the other framers of the constitution; but amidst the impatience of control that is generated by the American system, and the variety of local interests among the states, the difficulty is insuperable.

A certain analogy appears to me to exist between this great difficulty in the American constitution, and the great difficulty in our own. In the American, you have the state governments and you have the general government, each with their separate interests, at least with their appropriate temptations to infringe upon the powers of each other. So is it in our own. We have the royal power, the House of Peers, and the Commons House, each with propensities, feelings and prejudices of their own; but, as in the American constitution, all, nevertheless, fitted to harmonize into a whole, for the general benefit of the community: and neither in America, nor with us, can any writer or statesman be so ill employed, as in exciting animosity, creating causes of dissension, exaggerating the faults, diminishing the reputation, or weakening the constitutional importance of either or of any of these great component and necessary parts of the whole. Such conduct on either the one side of the Atlantic or the other, can proceed only from thoughtless, giddy, irritable, superficial men, who know not what they are doing, or from wicked and unprincipled men, who know too well.

With reason did Mr. Webster exert his utmost eloquence in animating his countrymen to the maintenance of the federal union of America; and there is scarcely a sentence in this part of his address, that is not applicable to our own union of king, lords and commons,—the established constitution of the realm of England. I will quote it at some length, and you can make the application as I read.

"I profess, sir," said Mr. Webster, "in my career hitherto, to have kept steadily in view the prosperity and honour of the whole country, and the preservation of our federal union. It is to that union we owe our safety at home, and our consideration and dignity abroad; it is to that union that we are chiefly indebted for whatever makes us most proud of our

country. That union, we reached only by the discipline of our virtues in the severe school of adversity. It had its origin in the necessities of disordered finance, prostrate commerce, and ruined credit. Under its benign influences, these great interests immediately awoke, as from the dead, and sprang forth with newness of life. Every year of its duration has teemed with fresh proofs of its utility and its blessings; and, although our territory has stretched out wider and wider, and our population spread farther and farther, they have not outrun its protection or its benefits. It has been to us all, a copious fountain of national, social and personal happiness. I have not allowed myself, sir, to look beyond the union, to see what might lie hidden in the dark recess behind; I have not coolly weighed the chances of preserving liberty, when the bonds that unite us together shall be broken asunder; I have not accustomed myself to hang over the precipice of disunion, to see whether, with my short sight, I can fathom the depth of the abyss below; nor could I regard him as a safe counsellor in the affairs of this government, whose thoughts should be mainly bent on considering, not how the union should be best preserved, but how tolerable should be the condition of the people, when it should be broken up and destroyed. While the union lasts we have high, exciting, gratifying prospects spread out before us, for us and our children. Beyond that, I seek not to penetrate the veil. God grant, that in my day, at least, that curtain may not rise! God grant, that on my vision never may be opened what lies behind! When my eyes shall be turned to behold, for the last time, the sun in heaven, may I not see him shining on the broken and dishonoured fragments of a once glorious union; on states dissevered, discordant, belligerent; on a land rent with civil feuds, or drenched, it may be, in fraternal blood!"

Such was the language, and such the sentiments of Mr. Webster. With reason did he pour out his soul in the patriotic effusion, which I have just read to you; and with equal reason might a patriot, in our own country, dedicate every energy of his mind, and every feeling of his heart, to the preservation and defence of that union, which, as Mr. Webster said of his own, has been to us all, a copious fountain of national, social, and personal happiness. "And never,"

to use his animated language, "never may the sun be seen to shine on the broken and dishonoured fragments of a once glorious union" of king, lords, and commons; "on powers dissevered, discordant, belligerent; on a land rent," as it once was, "with civil feuds, or drenched," as it once was, "in fraternal blood!"

"Other misfortunes," says Mr. Webster in his eulogy on Washington (the parent and protector of the American union), "other misfortunes may be borne, or their effects overcome." And we too, in England, may echo back the patriotic strain of Mr. Webster, for we too have had our misfortunes, and we too have a constitution that I trust we admire and love, as the Americans may, their republic. "Other misfortunes," says Mr. Webster, "may be borne, or their effects overcome." Let us make his sentiments our own. "If disastrous war should sweep our commerce from the ocean," says he, "another generation may renew it; if it exhaust our treasury, future industry may replenish it; if it desolate and lay waste our fields, still, under a new cultivation, they will grow again and ripen to future harvests. It were but a trifle, even if the walls of our Capitol were to crumble (and the walls of our Capitol, of our House of Parliament have so crumbled), if its lofty pillars should fall, and its gorgeous decorations be all covered by the dust of the valley. All these might be rebuilt; but who shall reconstruct the fabric of demolished government?" And well may we too say, "but who shall reconstruct the fabric of demolished government?" and with even more propriety than Mr. Webster, for his democratic government, "a breath may make it, as a breath has made." "Arbitrio popularis auræ." "Who shall rear again," continued Mr. Webster, "the well proportioned columns of constitutional liberty?" "Who shall frame together," said Mr. Webster, and what English patriot may not say the same? "the skilful architecture, which unites national sovereignty with state rights, individual security, and public prosperity? No, gentlemen, if these columns fall, they will be raised not again. Like the Coliseum and the Pantheon, they will be destined to a mournful, a melancholy immortality. Bitterer tears, however, will flow over them than were ever shed over the monuments of Roman or Grecian

art, for they will be the remnants of a more glorious edifice than Greece or Rome ever saw,—the edifice of constitutional American liberty."

"Constitutional American liberty," said Mr. Webster; and constitutional English liberty shall, in like manner, be said by me. Let each country be enamoured of its own; to each country may its own be best adapted. To me there may appear a far more refined and higher specimen of civilization in this favoured island than is or can be seen in America; but I contend only for candid estimates, for reasonable allowances in each country for the appropriate and inevitable evils of the other. I wage war only with exclusive systems, with this democratic doctrine, which first appeared in the arrogant pages of Paine, that no government can be lawful which rests not on the will of the majority, told by the head, that aristocracies of every kind, of birth, of rank, and of property, are mere usurpation and tyranny, and with the gradual civilization of the world must necessarily disappear. I look to no such revolutions in the world, or rather, in human nature; I consider such aristocracies as the great elements, materials, and results of the civilization of mankind; as the best hope, foundation, and support of that civilization; as the best protection against selfishness, vulgarity, the coarser vices, and the fierce and ruder passions of mankind; as the best promoters of every higher sentiment of benevolence, honour, and virtue, of taste, of literature, of learning, and of knowledge; of the aspirations of genius in every direction. Such aristocracies have ever existed in our island, and never may they decline or fall! They form the constitution of England, a constitution, to which, by birth, as an Englishman, by study, by gratitude, by reason, by every principle of duty and of feeling, I am, for one, deliberately but ardently attached, and I shall never cease to be attached, be the changes, and whims, and whirlwinds of opinion in this restless world, be they what they may; "non ego perfidum dixi sacramentum." Our country has had its misfortunes, the misfortunes of Europe. They were nigh fatal; they lie still heavy upon us. We may have committed our mistakes; we may have our faults. An old country cannot be without its difficulties; difficulties hard to wrestle with. In the midst of great exhi-

bitions of affluence and prosperity, great extremes of poverty and misery cannot but arise. Different classes of men may have their appropriate temptations and be found too ready to submit to them; but the constitution itself, the ancient constitution of our honoured land, the constitution of king, lords, and commons, each and all with their appropriate privileges and prerogatives, "Esto perpetua" be the cry, now and for ever; "esto perpetua;" for, whatever be our political differences, this at least should be the cry of every Englishman that deserves the name.

And I now, as my concluding effort, deliver this aspiration to you, to be the treasure of your hearts, and the maxim of your public conduct; and as far as your own country is concerned, to be considered by you, as the sum and substance of all political wisdom and all genuine patriotism.

LECTURE VI.

GENERAL SUMMARY.

DEC. 1837.

MY last lecture concluded with the termination of the American war,—the war with the colonies; and this is a period in the modern history of Europe. New scenes were afterwards preparing. It was a great event, the establishment of an immense republic; and, combined with other circumstances, produced a series of the most memorable scenes, that have occurred since the overthrow of the Roman empire. History seems to begin anew, so extraordinary are the events and so strange the opinions, which, no longer confined to the closet of the speculating philosopher, are seen on a sudden to influence the practical conduct of mankind.

To this great subject I have dedicated two courses of lectures, which I call Lectures on the French Revolution; little worthy indeed of the name, but which may serve to direct the curiosity of my hearers, and give them some general notion, at least, of this most important crisis in human affairs. These lectures I cannot now deliver—and I say this with some concern—for if I can hope to be useful to those, who hear me, it is chiefly, I think, by calling their attention to the characters and events of the French Revolution. The whole history from first to last is full of instruction, and I often observe, in society, with equal surprise and disquietude, how little it is known or how little remembered; on the whole, how little effect it seems to me to produce on the reasonings and conduct of those around me.

England, it is said, is not France, the English people not the French; totally unlike in their character and prior history. These are thought answers quite sufficient, if any allusion be made to these memorable scenes; and no doubt it is a consolation and support to a reflecting mind, that these are truths,

that may be acknowledged. But it is quite forgotten, at the same time, in how many important points human nature must ever be the same; how many valuable lessons may be drawn from remarking the tendencies of things to produce effects, whether the same exact effects and to the same extent may or may not be expected; how important in the philosophy of human affairs it is to provide against these tendencies in time, for when they have further ripened, any attempt of the kind may be too late; how much of human wisdom consists in prophetic discernment; how possible it is, to protect society from evil, if on its first appearance it be discountenanced; how rapid is often the growth of evil, when nourished and assisted by the carelessness or apathy of those, who, although in reality opposed to it, resist it not, and commit the great military fault, so often fatal, of despising their enemy. It is for reasons such as these, that I could have wished to have now proceeded to the consideration of the French Revolution; and in a Scotch or foreign university, this would have been very practicable; but public lectures are not the system of instruction adopted in our university; and of late years the examinations in the studies of the place have been so multiplied, as to leave no encouragement and no opportunity for the delivery of lectures on any other subjects; and the professors must make the best of the little time that is left to each of them, a few weeks in every year, and not interfere with each other.

I must now therefore endeavour in some single lecture to put my hearers in possession of the general state of the European world, such as it has now become by the united effect of past events. And this I shall do by alluding briefly to those, that I conceive to be the main events; neglecting others, and leaving, I hope, a general impression on your minds of the whole of the case, down to the present moment.

This is a species of writing, which I have not before ventured upon. I mean not now to engage in it, to any great extent; though it is a very favourite sort of composition among foreign writers. They delight in displaying the sweeping opinions of their daring minds, and in dazzling their audience by the wonders of their speculations and their brilliant discoveries of great principles; principles, that, however unknown to

mankind themselves, have in fact, as they suppose, actuated their conduct and produced by a concatenated and irresistible necessity the events of history. They even look down upon our own established historians as defective in philosophy, as poorly contenting themselves with the mere narrative of events; as supplying no materials for the study of powerful and contemplative minds. I have myself, I confess, no particular relish for writers of this description. Their grand abstract positions are often very disputable, and are always objectionable as introducing into the mind those doctrines of necessity and irresistible concatenation of events in politics, so favourable to unfeeling revolutions, and so fatal to all counsels of moderation and preventive wisdom. Compositions of this nature are chiefly of use as a discipline of the mind, rather than as an immediate instruction; as straining and invigorating the faculties, and enabling men the better, on other occasions, to think for themselves in a commanding manner. But it is a flaunting, ambitious mode of writing; little suited to the sober phlegm and cautious good sense of our own historians.

Sir James Mackintosh, however, is in this way very distinguished; very striking specimens of general views and estimates may be found in his various works. M. de Guizot in his Cours d'Histoire Moderne, has been also much admired. But the student who meditates well the introduction of Robertson to his Charles V.; the two chapters which I have mentioned, on the rise and progress of towns, in Adam Smith; and the careless and inimitable beauties of Hume, so felt and so justly praised by Mr. Gibbon; will not I think want the instruction to be derived from the times that are past, or be at all deficient in the real and intelligible philosophy of history. Alluding to these, our own distinguished authors, "A strong light," says Mr. Gibbon, "has been lately shed from the north on the philosophy of history."

I must close this subject by repeating what I have before observed, that abridgments of history, and these general estimates of history, cannot be at all understood, unless the details of history are first known; that the passing pictures they present "come like shadows, so depart;" and are seldom found to leave any impression on the memory.

In the lecture I am now going to deliver, my notices of past

history will be short and simple, and such as refer only to the lectures I have delivered; and they may be tedious to those who have not heard them, but they may thus the better impress upon the minds of those who have, and who must be my first object, the points which, I conceive, ought more particularly to be remembered.

To begin, therefore, my attempt to put you in possession of the general state of the European world, such as it has now become by the united effect of past events,—the first great subject presented to the reader of modern history is the irruption of the northern nations; their contentions with the Romans for the empire of Europe. They at last prevailed; and the general conclusion is, that it was fortunate that they did so. "The stature of mankind," says the great historian, "was daily sinking below the old standard, when the fierce giants of the north broke in, and mended the puny breed." They certainly engrafted upon the European character those manly virtues, that have given purity to our social intercourse, freedom to our minds, and courage and enterprise to our arms; rendering us at once the models and the conquerors of the rest of the world; too often, no doubt (so inseparable is good and evil) the unprincipled invaders and ferocious tyrants.

In the mean time, the next great event is the progress and establishment of Christianity. And though not within my province, I cannot avoid making one passing remark: that the rise and progress of this religion is totally unintelligible upon any, but one supposition; and this supposition is, its truth. No reasoner can stir a step in explanation, not Mr. Gibbon himself, without this supposition; on any other, this religion, which may be seen in the world, during the middle ages, giving light to those that sat in darkness (not being recommended to our earthly passions, and if not true, not assisted by heavenly influence), is a phenomenon partaking entirely of the nature of miracle, and, if I may use such a metaphor, is a sort of edifice hanging in the air, not suspended from above and with no support from below.

The next great event is the establishment of the papal power. The student must not fail to observe, that Christianity was diffused over Europe, and appeared in different

churches in different parts of it; very visibly in the Greek church in Constantinople; and that the domination of the Latin church, the establishment of the papacy, was a subsequent and distinct monopoly, as it were, of Christianity; was an usurpation; and was every where attended with the most fatal effects, though no doubt in the dark ages great benefit was derived in many important respects from the ministers and institutions of the Roman Catholic religion itself. But the Catholic Christian church must not for a moment be confounded with the Roman Catholic or the Church of Rome; nor the first Christianity, that appears in the works of the fathers or more early bishops of those various churches, with the papal doctrines, that were afterwards propagated; nor their spiritual authority with that, which was afterwards assumed.

Another great object of the student's attention is now the feudal system; the result of the conquests of these northern nations, gradually established, and to be considered as at first the civilizer of mankind; as introducing into the savage character of mere soldiers and warriors, social feelings and a sense of duty, but afterwards, from the brutal selfishness of uneducated man, marked by such contrivances of tyranny and cruelty, as rendered it the great evil with which society had to struggle. The papal tyranny completed the thraldom of the suffering world; and these long remained the two great evils, on which the attention of the student must be fixed, while he is observing the fortunes of the European portion of mankind.

But in the midst of the scenes, to which we are thus adverting, a most extraordinary event took place,—the rise and progress of a new religion, the characteristic doctrine of which was, "There is but one God, and Mahomet is his prophet:" —an eternal truth and a superadded fiction. An individual starts up in the deserts of Arabia, and, with his Koran in one hand and his sword in the other, is, in the middle of the seventh century, to be seen, overrunning his own country; and his followers, in the same spirit and with all the military virtues, afterwards proposing to mankind the same alternative, of adopting the one or being destroyed by the other, till they had nigh subdued all the kingdoms of Europe; and were not checked in their career, till they had far advanced into France

itself. This religion, these conquests, and the impression made and left upon Europe, by the arms, the arts, the science, the literature, and the magnificence of the Arabs, are well deserving the observation of the student, and must be always considered, as a very striking portion of the modern history of Europe.

These fanatical invaders, with their false religion and overwhelming arms, were resisted to the utmost by the Christian powers, and this resistance at length assumed the form of the memorable crusades; which is the next subject to which the student will have to turn. Religious feeling and a thirst for military glory were the two great impulses by which, at this time, the human mind was moved; and Europe was precipitated upon Asia, at the call of an obscure enthusiast, who summoned the feudal chivalry and the multitude to avenge the wrongs of the pilgrims, and to rescue from the profane tread of the infidel the Holy Land, that had been blessed by the footsteps of the Saviour. These expeditions had necessarily a great influence on the manners and prosperity of Europe; whether favourable or not has been a subject on which different opinions have been delivered by our great writers; and these opinions must be examined by the student for himself.

I have already intimated that the two great evils with which mankind had to struggle were the feudal system and the papal power. The latter could not be benefited, but much the contrary, by the general agitation of Europe and intercourse of men with each other; and the feudal power was shook in its inmost foundations, the feudal chiefs were impoverished and destroyed, the commercial classes brought forward and enriched, the monarch rendered more able to protect the one and resist the other.

But against these two evils, and against every evil, both in these times and at all times, a great principle must be always considered as struggling, the common intelligence of human nature; the principle by which mankind are impelled in every way, whether of intellectual or physical exertion, to better their condition. This principle is always in existence and even at work, though sometimes scarce perceptible to the eyes of the observer; languid, no doubt, and torpid

during the dark ages, during the reign of ignorance, military violence, and superstitious observances, but quickening into activity as the middle ages advanced, and at last producing what is called the age of inventions and discoveries. Thus we have now to note the inventions of paper, and above all the invention of printing, of gunpowder, the discovery of the magnetic needle, of the figure of the earth, and the power of searching for and visiting by maritime expeditions distant countries and nations before unheard of and unknown. No subject can be more interesting to a meditative student than these enterprises and these efforts of the human mind, all that can be known of them in the history of science, and all that can be gathered from the early histories of Hakluyt and Purchas.

At last, the student arrives at the great event of all, the Reformation. Long prepared by the increasing intelligence of mankind, and more immediately by the revival of learning; favourite subjects these for the readers of history; the Reformation, for instance, is one totally inexhaustible. Every student must judge for himself, but, for my own part, though lives of the reformers and histories of the Reformation are continually appearing, appearing every year, down to the present moment, I can turn to them all, and read them with increasing avidity; so interesting is the subject of Christianity in itself, and so extraordinary the labours and the virtues, so striking the situations, the manners, and the characters of those by whom our holy religion was rescued from the errors and pretensions of the Roman see.

No doubt the leading observations that have been made on this great event are quite just; that it is impossible sufficiently to estimate the impulse that has been given to the progress of society, by the freedom that has been thus procured for the human mind: this in the first place. But again, and in the second, that no such freedom was ever intended on religious subjects by Luther and his successors. What they intended was, the discovery of the truths of the Gospel, and to exhibit to the Christian world what the doctrines of the New Testament really were. For these truths they were ready to die, but at all events they were determined to propagate them; and being satisfied that they had discovered them, all

resistance to their creeds was supposed to be resistance to the Almighty Master, a crime of the most revolting nature, and on every account to be prevented by any possible punishment.

The same views had been taken and the same conduct pursued, but with still more rage and cruelty, by their Roman Catholic opponents. It is afflicting to observe that it took the warfare of a hundred years before the religious differences of Europe could be adjusted, as they were, at the peace of Westphalia. The history of France more particularly, during these times, is a scene of total horror. It took seventy years, in like manner, to rescue the Low Countries from the Inquisition and the tyranny of the Spanish monarchy: and the contentions with each other of the members of the church of England, the Puritans, the Presbyterians, and the Papists degraded our own island for many successive years (for more than a century), and polluted its fair fields and towns with the ashes of suffering martyrs and the carnage of civil wars.

These are memorable scenes in the history of Europe: the student must meditate them thoroughly. They are awful lessons, to show the fury of which men are capable on religious subjects: and to discover a remedy for this evil, or even the best palliative for this evil, is indeed a problem which the student will find well worthy of his best powers of reflection; for he is not to be indifferent to religious truth on the one hand, nor to the peace of society on the other; to the desirableness of securing the sober administration of religion, and yet of giving freedom to the human mind on the most important of all subjects.

The governments of Europe were, in the mean time, of a feudal and monarchical form. Republics had, indeed, existed in Italy, the disturbed scenes of ambition and genius, to which Sismondi has dedicated his innumerable volumes, which have been honoured with the marked praise of Mr. Hallam, and need no other. An aristocratic republic, of a singular nature, had appeared in Venice: and a hallowed spot had been found for the exercise of the manly and simple virtues under republican forms in Switzerland. In Holland, too, after its delivery from the Spanish yoke, a republic had been formed, which afforded a refuge for the victims of civil and

religious liberty, and a free press for the publication of their writings during many important years, when men of this elevated temperament had to maintain their warfare with their various enemies, chiefly, however, with the adherents of the Roman see.

And in this manner the student will be conducted to the great subject of the later history of Europe, the grandeur of Louis XIV., the resistance made to his ambition by Europe, and more particularly by this island, under the auspices of the illustrious William III. and the renowned Marlborough; and the extraordinary exhibition of arts and of arms, of learning and of genius, that so elevated the great kingdom of France, and that constituted what was called the age of Louis XIV., as it has been well described by Voltaire, and that then, and ever since, has given her such a preponderating influence over the taste and the manners of all the other nations of Europe.

The student will naturally direct his thoughts to this great object of attention in European history: but he must afterwards turn to an object of still greater attraction, in his own island, to the Revolution of 1688; and to the extraordinary degree of civil and religious liberty, internal strength, continually increasing prosperity, and individual virtue and happiness, exhibited and enjoyed by the inhabitants of this country, for more than a century, from their own down to the French Revolution in 1789.

During all this period a constitution of government had existed (the fortunate result of the contentions and events of our history prior to the Revolution of 1688) which had received the praises of all political writers, foreign and domestic, from Montesquieu down to Paley, and which, by its mixture of the various elements of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, was well fitted to administer the advantages of each, with little of the evils of each, to an European community; well fitted to afford to every man free scope for his genius, and the proper rewards of his merits, yet to keep every man in his proper place: on the whole, well fitted to form the taste, the manners, and the virtues, to provide for the religious feelings, to advance the commercial and manufacturing prosperity, and to maintain the national importance

of any collection of human beings that were to exist in the old world of Europe.

But human prosperity is frail, and human wisdom unstable. About a century after the Revolution a project was unfortunately formed by the British cabinet for taxing America. It was forgotten that these colonies were peopled by men of republican education, feelings, and habits; that representation had always accompanied taxation; that America had no representatives in the British parliament; that resistance would necessarily be made, as in fact it afterwards was made; and, in the result, the fine armies of England were captured and defeated. France took the opportunity of avenging herself on her ancient rival, and the independence of the United States of America was formally acknowledged, and a great and flourishing republic established on the other side of the Atlantic.

This striking event seemed for some time little to affect the world. England repaired her strength under the influence of her admirable constitution; new inventions and discoveries enabled her to improve and multiply her manufactures, and to send them at reduced prices, with which it was impossible to contend, all over the world. France seemed still to be what she had always been, magnificent and gay, a youthful queen,—

> "The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
> The observed of all observers"—

a splendid court, a beneficent sovereign, a powerful hierarchy, an attached nobility, gallant and loyal armies, still decorated with the laurels of their victories in the West Indies and in America.

But all was false and hollow: new notions had been introduced into the world. The philosophers and licentious writers of France had not laboured, had not excited and corrupted the rising generation in vain; and the long continued and disgusting profligacy of the court and higher orders, on which I have dwelt in my lectures on the Reign of Louis XV., had but too fatally given countenance to their theories and inventions. Add to this, that a great empire had arisen on the other side of the Atlantic, founded on new

principles of political right, very agreeable in many respects to the speculations of these philosophers. Many, too, of the French officers that had assisted in the establishment of those principles in America, could not but have imbibed them in the progress of the contest; and under these critical circumstances, it happened that the financial exigencies of the French monarchy rendered an appeal to the public for assistance, in some way or other, necessary.

An occasion was thus unhappily afforded for every man to come forward with his theories of improvement, his seditious harangues and popular declamations, addressed to a theatric nation, that moreover had very great abuses and serious evils to complain of, and the result was the most direful confusion and disorder, the most tremendous Revolution that has ever overwhelmed the world with its miseries and horrors since the irruptions of the northern nations and the fall of the Roman empire.

For the new notions were at total variance with the old. Governments were now to be founded, not on the feudal distinctions of rank, but on the more plausible system of the equality of all men, and the sovereign will of the people; all artificial distinctions were to cease; kings, nobles, and the hierarchies of religion were to be swept away; moral instincts were to be superseded by the calculations of utility; and society was to be remodified, and to enter upon a new career of liberty and light, regenerated and emancipated from its ancient shackles of slavish prejudice and debasing superstition.

These were speculations that could not but shock the sober part of mankind; and when they were to be acted upon and enforced, could not but encounter the most heartfelt opposition of all the regular and more elevated members of society. But they *were* acted upon and enforced; they were hurried into the most frightful excesses in France, and her conquering armies spread them over the rest of Europe, and even threatened the destruction of all the political, moral, and religious feelings and principles of England itself. Mahomet and his Koran were again exemplified in the French general and his creed of "Liberty and equality;" and it seemed as if the Almighty Governor of the world had aban-

doned mankind to their own wild imaginations, to work out for themselves the punishment of their astonishing wickedness and crimes. What afterwards followed? The horror of thinking and good men was only changed into terror, when to the blood-stained ruffians of the Jacobin school succeeded the military usurper, who by his victories annihilated all the regular powers of Europe, and at length rushed forward, with the most powerful army that had ever existed among mankind, to the total subjugation of the continent by the overthrow of the refractory empire of Russia.

But it pleased the Almighty to look down with pity upon his creatures; "He arose to judgment and to help the meek upon earth;" and these invading hosts became "as dust before the wind and the angel of the Lord scattering them." The Sennacherib of old fled not from the soil he had invaded with a more signal destruction: and it remained for the armies of England, and her renowned captain, to have the crowning honour of giving the last fatal blow to the struggling and still formidable warrior, and in him to the most hard-hearted tyranny that, with all "the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war," and amid the smiling blandishments of science and the arts, had ever mocked the feelings and trampled down the independence of a suffering world.

And the world appeared now to breathe again and to revive. This magnificent despot, fitted alike to deceive or to subdue, was removed from her sight; and it seemed as if every man was now again to live under his vine and under his fig tree, and society to be allowed to repose after her long troubled and sleepless night of agony and woe.

But not so: and a benevolent philosopher, surveying mankind during the years that have succeeded, might break out, like the prophet, into a melancholy wish, "that his eyes were a fountain of tears," "that he had a lodging place in the wilderness;" or, in the paraphrase of the poet,

> "Some boundless contiguity of shade,
> Where rumour of oppression or deceit,
> Of unsuccessful or successful war,
> Might never reach him more."

In my lectures on the French Revolution I have confessed

that, during that period, in my judgment at least, neither the high party nor the low have the slightest right to plume themselves on the wisdom of their counsels or the virtues of their conduct. Must or must not the same censure be extended to the same parties, wherever they may be found, in these late subsequent years? What were the lessons of the French Revolution? Timely reform from the ruler; modesty of expectation from the reformer; moderation, candour, from all; from all, an united effort, as soon as possible, to improve the situation of the community, and yet to avoid all revolution, all chance of exciting the tremendous passions of mankind.

I cannot enter into modern politics; I have now reached them. I cannot finish, as in the proper keeping of the different parts of my lecture I ought now to do, the general historic picture which I at first promised. I cannot now give what I called the whole of the case; I am fearful of abusing the opportunities of a lecturer; I must keep apart,

"Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,"

whatever may be the crowd, whether of the high or of the low—I have always observed this duty of my situation. But a case may occur when this duty no longer applies; and the case is now before me. The democratic principles of the French Revolution revived when the pressure of the military despotism of France was removed.

Whoever was in fault, or whatever were the circumstances that led to it (these I cannot, as I have intimated, now discuss), but the fact was, that when the terror of the French arms had ceased, these democratic principles every where revived; and it is against these democratic principles that I have always, and that I now think I have a right, and that it is my perfect duty, to protest. By these democratic principles, I mean, the new notions of government, originally, and to a certain extent, exemplified in North America; and transmitted from thence into the minds of the revolutionists of France in the year 1789, and there paraded in the view of an impetuous people: notions of government totally inconsistent with the system of morals, of manners, and of political right established in this country. I am not to stand here to debate the merits

or the measures of our rulers or their opponents, but I am to defend the constitution of the land; I am to stand up for the great elementary principles which are necessary to our mixed government, and associated with our institutions, and which have been always cherished and held sacred by the inhabitants of this favoured island: and so far at least, not further, but so far at least, I shall not scruple to allude to the politics of the day; and I shall ask, with a voice not a little partaking of impatience and indignation, I shall ask, Does not England, at least, whatever may become of the other parts of Europe and the world, does not England, at least, escape from the influence of these new notions? Is not England, at least, whatever may have been the distresses of the different parts of our community, agricultural, manufacturing, commercial, on the conclusion of such an unexampled war as we waged, is not England, at least, secured from these new notions, by all that she has seen of them, by all that she has read and heard of them, by all that she has felt and suffered, by all that she has enjoyed, amid the general calamities of surrounding nations, by all that she still enjoys, is not she, at least, secured from the senseless levity of undervaluing her own blessings, from the giddy folly of longing for the blessings of others, from the fatal ignorance of expecting to unite inconsistent advantages and realize impossibilities?

How melancholy, and even how provoking, is the answer that any impartial observer is obliged to return to questions like these! Judging from the conduct and reasonings of too many among us, we should say, that the French Revolution had rolled over us, with all its thunders, in vain; and that we were as thoughtless, presumptuous, and ignorant of our real nature now, as we were at the first breaking out of the French Revolution in 1789; as thoughtless, presumptuous, and ignorant as we were before the great political and moral prophet had, in his "Reflections on the French Revolution," warned us, and warned us early, of the rashness of our admiration; and shown distinctly that he, of all others, best understood the fatal nature of the principles of that Revolution, and the miseries that it was preparing for a giddy world. We adopt (speaking of too many among us at least), we adopt its

principles; we are candidates for its miseries. We fall down before the revolutionary idol, the Moloch of these unhappy times—the sovereign people. We cast off our nobility, abjure our priests, and disrobe them of their honours, and think no more, or only with derision, of our ranks and orders and ancient institutions. The new political opinions of 1789 still occupy the minds of too many of us, as if their perilous nature, when let loose upon an established society, had not been sufficiently exemplified: for we have learned the art, it seems, of self-government; not, indeed, the moral art of governing ourselves, the inestimable art of self-control, very little of this nature, it must be confessed; but the republican art of self-government, as it is called; that is, the art of governing by the majority, the mere majority, no matter how constituted or numbered, the art of resolving a kingdom into parishes, and governing by its vestries.

Of this notable and sublime discovery, the first proposer in this country was the celebrated Paine; celebrated, when such men could obtain respect, at the unhappy period of 1792. Paine, with his Rights of Man, was the agitator of former times. He had discovered, it seems, that we, the pitiable people of England, had no constitution, and that we had, therefore, only to call a convention and make one; nothing more. Mr. Godwin followed with his political justice, his society without government, and his morality without natural instincts; and Miss Wostencraft crowned the whole by unsexing the females. So that what with Paine with his Rights of Man,. Miss Wostencraft with her Rights of Woman, and Godwin with his Rights of Justice, nothing was left in the world but wrong and injustice, according to the then existing notions of the world: and it requires no great discernment to see that the revolutionary specifics are now, as they were then and must always be, still the same. Turn mankind into mob, women into men, and let go the universal happiness principle, and the business is done; the stage is prepared, the actors ready, the prompter's bell (the tocsin) has only to sound, and the tragedy may begin. But at the time I speak of, the breaking out of the French Revolution, these were capital discoveries; and the age that, in my historic account, I have just mentioned, the age of inventions and discoveries,

with its gunpowder and new world, its explosions and its astonishments, sank miserably into the shade; and clubs, and public meetings, and resolutions, and revolutionary and corresponding societies, followed in due succession, and all the wild phenomena of a world broke loose from its keepers.

Such were the scenes that we poor mortals exhibited, even in this our island, calm and reasonable as we suppose ourselves to be; cold and phlegmatic as we are held to be, by those who are animated by a gayer climate, and inspired by a warmer sun. But this was more than thirty years ago, before all the sad experience of mankind had chastised men, as it might have been hoped, into more becoming humility and a better wisdom. Is it to be tolerated that any thing of this nature should *still* exist among us, that a single individual should be found insensible to the value of the various institutions, forms, and ceremonies, the machinery of necessary government, that have long been established among us, that have been engrafted on the thoughts and feelings and habits of the country, and become part of the very nature of the multitude? Is the fable of the "mola restauratrix" to be considered as a reality, and is our aged country to be thrown into the republican mill, and ground young again? and is she to come forth, not in all the glitter of renovated life, full of splendour and joy; elegance in her attire, grace in her step, and attraction and charm in every look and gesture; but sordid in her habit, coarse in her aspect, and mean and vulgar in her manner and deportment; seeking only to provide for the necessities of our nature, weighing every thing in no other balance, and with no imagination to travel beyond them or delicacy to refine them; busy and bustling, and jostling every thing out of the way, that may happen to be in it, and neither wanting nor wishing nor understanding the value of the decorations of life, its elevations, and its honours, the civilities, the courtesies, the interchanged affections and enjoyments which a highly civilized life is competent to afford? Far and for ever be removed from us these experiments of a groveling and wretched philosophy! Let us rather find our country in the imagery of the poet, let us rather see her in the "milkwhite hind, im-

mortal and unchanged," though no doubt too similar in her fortunes,

" For she has oft been chased with horns and hounds,
And Scythian shafts; and many winged wounds
Aimed at her heart; been often forced to fly,
And doomed to death, though fated not to die."

And never may she die, neither by the open assault of her enemies nor by their prescriptions for her better health and welfare; for in her would die, the most magnificent spectacle of a civilized country that the world has ever seen.

How is it possible for men to have lived in a land like this, and not be deeply impressed with the value of its constitution of government? But suppose a person so struck with the advantages of the republican form, that he thinks every other inferior; is he therefore on that account to take every opportunity to undermine the constitution of government under which he has been bred and born, and to make no distinction between his speculations when in his closet and his practical conduct as a member of the community, as a subject of the state? Is he to see no arrogance in preferring his own opinion to those of others, no evil in civil dissension, no folly in hazarding the realized good of the present for the possible good of the future, in a world of unforeseen events, and in the face of all the wild and fierce and unreasonable passions of mankind?

What are we to say of such a person? Is there any sobriety of temperament in him, any vigour of understanding, any acuteness of discernment, any power of prospective calculation, any sagacity and any wisdom, such as we should wish to find in those, to whom we would trust our affairs in private, much less the affairs of our country in public?

Take another case, and one more common. The community it is said, is intelligent; let it therefore influence its representative assembly, and let all power be in fact lodged in that popular assembly.

Is it considered what a single assembly uniformly becomes, when in possession of all the power of the state? Are there not different sorts of tyrants? Is there any tyrant so unfeeling as a single assembly, so unjust, so immoral? Are not large

bodies of men, and therefore both the community and its representative assembly, subject to sudden frenzies and wide-spreading delusions?

But sooner or later, it is said, they will become reasonable. And does it follow, that they will be reasonable in time? Am I to trust my concerns to a man, liable to be intoxicated, because after intoxication he will become sober and do his best to repair the faults he has committed? Far from any crude folly of the kind, far from leaving every thing to depend on one popular assembly, will it not be more prudent to divide the power of the state, to provide some check for a popular assembly? And what contrivance can be so good, as a second assembly, not of the same nature with the first, one if possible not likely to be affected by popular epidemics, so that the popular will shall only prevail when it is clearly right? But this, it will be said, is to create two antagonist assemblies, and leave all legislation impossible; the business of the country must be always at a stand. To this it may be answered, that a particular case of this kind may possibly arise, but it will be of rare occurrence, and may, in a general calculation, like other rare cases, be neglected; and even, however rare, can never occur, except when it is not a little doubtful whether the popular assembly be reasonable; since if reasonable, it is not likely to be long resisted, supported as in such a case it will be, not only by the respectable part of the community, but by the resounding voice of the multitude and its physical strength. But this voice of the multitude with its physical strength is, it seems, all that is at any time wanted for the perfection of our social system. A popular writer observes, "that it is the nature and prerogative of free states to concentrate the popular will into something of the unity of despotism, by producing one after another a series of representatives for the wants and exigencies of the hour;" of the hour, you will observe: "each leading his generation," he goes on to say, "but only while he sympathizes with its will; and either baffling or succeeded by his rivals, not in proportion as he excels or is outshone in genius, but as he gives or ceases to give the widest range of the legislative power, and the most concentrated force of the executive; thus uniting the desires of the greatest number under the adminis-

tration of the narrowest possible control,—the constitution popular, the government absolute but responsible."

Responsible! that is, each demagogue responsible to the demagogue that succeeds.

But what is the whole of this system, as far as it is intelligible, this constitution popular and government absolute, but the French constitution of 1793, and the government of the Committee of Public Safety, the succession of the Girondists, Jacobins, and Terrorists, the Barnaves, the Dantons and Robespierres, each perishing after the other, each in their turn subservient to the public will; and this public will, the defence set up for their sanguinary reigns by the base French historians, who would thus shelter their country from the just reproaches of mankind? And these are the doctrines of government that openly or covertly are in fact promulgated and enforced by our most distinguished agitators.

I am consenting to argue upon the most general grounds and admitting the most republican notions. But suppose a mixed monarchy to be desirable, and there is an instant end of the question. The monarch, on the system supposed, is a phantom, and cannot maintain even the outward appearances and ceremonies of royalty, but on the condition of subserviency to the will of this single or double popular assembly.

And the same degraded state will be the fate of the assembly itself, subservient in like manner to the will of the people, or rather the will of the conceited, hotheaded, and generally selfish individuals, who, with popular talents of eloquence and effrontery, collect the people into public meetings, assume the name and authority of the whole community, and draw up resolutions, which, from their virulence and presumption, are received with the loudest acclamations, are considered as the concentration of human wisdom, and as leaving no chance, no hope of respect, for the knaves or fools who did not choose to be present at the performance, and who could possibly think of being of a different opinion.

But is not this to speak of public meetings in a disparaging manner? Not in the least. I am speaking only of public meetings under a supposed form of government of a democratic nature; of public meetings in periods of excitement, when the low are more or less leagued against the high;

occasions, when it is, in free governments, neither consistent with the order of society nor even the progress of reason, that the low should prevail: I am not speaking of public meetings under a mixed and properly attempered form of government; not when men are exercising their faculties and consulting about their interests with sobriety and moderation, and are in a state of proper respect for the institutions of their country, and the acknowledged principles that belong to the system of their government:—such public meetings are quite invaluable to a free country.

It is indeed astonishing to observe the difference between the same public, when in its sober and natural state, and when in a state on whatever account of excitement. Consider the transformation that takes place in the character of those who come forward on these occasions. The love of applause, the impossibility of winning it but by extravagance, what wonders do they not perform? The delight of sympathy, the electric influence of a popular principle, the exhilarating nature of contention, the exultation of victory, what phenomena do they not produce? How insensible do they not make men to all the ordinary suggestions of candour, of justice, of good sense; how entirely insensible both the leaders and followers of a party to the merits of their opponents, to any reasonings that can be opposed to their own, to any claims of their country, to the most obvious suggestions of patriotism and purity of principle, to the slightest refinement or caution in adjusting their estimates of men and things; how totally incapable of relishing any thing, but the coarse fury of zeal in a cause, no matter what may be the consequencesof the success of that cause, at what price it is to be purchased, by what evils to be followed; how reckless of the fearful nature of the irritable passions of mankind, and the difficulty with which the affairs of the world can be composed, when they have been once disorganized! And yet how seriously should such things be considered! Look at the instance of Washington; observe the sufferings and anxiety of his mind, till the concerns of America could, after the war, be reduced to order. Look at France. Her Revolution broke out in 1789; thirty—forty long years have elapsed; and what has been ever since the constitution of her government, and

what is it at this moment? Look at the great kingdom of Spain; look at Portugal, at the provinces of South America: survey the world wherever you please, and while the conflagrations of states and empires are, in some instances, still flaming before our eyes, or while in others, the embers are still glowing, and the dilapidated and broken walls of once stately edifices are frowning around us, (and how are they to be repaired?) while these awful admonitions of the past are still glaring or smouldering in our view, turn and think, not of the true reformer, who approaches the constitution of his country, as an artist would attempt to revive a Titian or a Raphael, but turn and listen to one of our agitators on the hustings of a manufacturing town, at a public meeting, or even in our senate; listen to the confident reasonings of one of these magnificent speculators, these very superior thinkers, as you meet them in common society, these pretenders to originality, a fame very easily acquired, either in prose or verse, for a man has only to write or say something too absurd to have been ever said or written before, and he is original; look at the effusions of our metropolitan press; look at some of our monthly and weekly publications; look at even some of the higher journals; think of these suicidal ravings, for they deserve no better name, in a land like this. "Facilis descensus Averni" is too trite a quotation to be now made. But how has it become so? From being so often suggested by the folly and presumption of mankind.

Very taking, in the mean time, are the watchwords that are inscribed on the banners of these agitators: liberality, freedom, religious liberty, love of the people, diffusion of knowledge, general happiness, and whatever may catch the fancies of the multitude and may have caught their own.

Far be it from me to think lightly of such terms as these! Duly applied, they are justly dear to every generous mind: but I would lift high a banner, and inscribe on it one term only, one however, that properly understood, includes them all—The Constitution of England. Be this the banner to float over our public meetings, to accompany and shed a lustre over our public processions, and at once to fill the hearts of those who mean well, with confidence and strength, and to fill the minds of those who mean ill, with confusion and

dismay; like "the pillar of the cloud that gave light to the camp of Israel, but was a cloud and darkness to the Egyptians that followed."

But a word more with regard to these popular terms. It is observed by Mr. Burke, that when our Henry VIII. resolved to rob the abbeys, he set on foot commissions to examine into crimes and abuses, and he procured a formal surrender of the estates. But all these operose proceedings were adopted, he says, by one of the most decided tyrants in the rolls of history, as necessary preliminaries, before he could venture to bribe the members of his two servile houses with a share of the spoils, and demand a confirmation of his iniquitous proceedings by an act of parliament. But had fate, Mr. Burke continues, reserved him to our times, four technical terms would have done his business and saved him all this trouble. He needed nothing more than one short form of incantation:—"Philosophy, light, liberality, and the rights of man."

Men cannot be too often warned against high-sounding terms, and required to examine thoroughly what at the moment their practical application and meaning really is. There is not a virtue in the whole catalogue, that does not in its excess become a vice; nor one, that, if mistaken in its application, is not more injurious to society than vice itself. A kind Providence protect this honoured land, honoured every where but by its own unnatural children; a kind Providence protect it, from folly of every kind, from the folly of goodness as from the folly of wickedness! It is a mighty nation; it is an ancient nation; and it exceeds the temper of a mere speculator on human affairs, and a reader of history, to observe these things without emotion; and I neither understand any apathy on such a subject, nor can for a moment affect it.

But the community, it is thought, is sound in principle and healthy in feeling, is sober-minded at all times, and not likely to be led astray by these pretenders and deceivers, however plausible.

There is much truth in this consideration; and eternal honour be to those who, under whatever various forms of patriotism, enable a general observer so to believe! But how comes it, that these men, these pretenders and deceivers,

are numerous enough to have acquired an appellation; that they are the idols of the large constituencies, that plume themselves forsooth on their superior lights; and that they form a distinct part of our House of Commons, and incline, as they choose, the balance of the other two opposing parties? But be this as it may, what I contend for is, that the sounds they utter should never be once heard among us. They were heard in the times of Charles I. and at the breaking out of the French Revolution; but in the orderly and happy state of the community, never. They are an insult to the realm and treason to the constitution; and it is not enough to say, that they "pass by us like the idle wind, which we regard not;" it is not the fact, nor, if it were, would it be sufficient; they are sounds unhallowed and not to be breathed aloud, sounds to which the public ear is not to be familiarized. The mechanic nature of the mind is well known, and must often be provided against. Men may by use and custom be reconciled to any thing, even to crimes, from which they would at first have recoiled with instinctive horror. We are not to sport with, we are not to blunt or deaden the warm and honest feelings, the unsophisticated good sense of the true-hearted Englishman, who has been accustomed to love the constitution of the land, the land of our sires, the land of patriots and sages, who died on the scaffold, in the field of battle, at the stake, to bequeath to us this constitution civil and religious; an inheritance too precious to be lightly valued; far too precious to be gambled away at the table of republican novelty.

And what, after all, is this republican system, for which such sacrifices are to be made? I have endeavoured to show in two concluding lectures of last year, and which I purpose to deliver this, that the example of America is no example for us, and that if we approximate to it by resting our monarchy upon democratic foundations, we thus prepare it for gradual but inevitable destruction. Democratic foundations are inconsistent with it, from the absorbing and usurping nature of all democratic principles. And again I ask, what after all, are these democratic foundations? They are the perfectibility of man, they are his virtue and his intelligence, they are his pure and enlightened patriotism, influencing him at every moment. These are no very trifling virtues to be required

from a community, not very likely to be found. And what turns out to be the fact even in America itself?

"The American people," says a very able female writer, just returned from the country, entirely enamoured of their system of government, and thinking it the only reasonable one on earth, even this writer is obliged to say, "The American people have not only much to learn, and a painful discipline to endure, but some disgraceful faults to repent of and amend. They must give a perpetual and earnest heed to one point, to cherish their high democratic hope, their faith in man: the true democratic hope cannot consist with the distrust of man; its basis is the unmeasured scope of humanity, and its rationale the truth applicable alike to individuals and to nations, that men are, what they are taken for granted to be. Whenever the Americans or any other people shall make integrity their rule, their criterion, their invariable supposition, the first principles of political philosophy will be fairly acted out, and the high democratic hope will be its own justification."

And this is the beau ideal of republican philosophy, the foundation of the republican system. At what a distance from ideas like these, are the ideas of our pious divines, who insist upon the doctrines of original sin, and that "the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked?" On the contrary we must, it seems, have recourse to it as the genuine source of all future political good, and as "the great and sure hope of humanity." Far from suspecting our imperfect nature, we are to depend on its perfectibility; and governments are to be made secure and men are to be made happy, by their faith in the virtues of each other, and by the deep sense that each man is to feel of what the writer calls "the grandeur of a congregated million of like spirits to his own." Certainly our divines, the more moderate of them at least, find an echo in our bosoms, far more responsive than does this imaginative writer; who, like the reasoners of her school, dreams over the high purity of beings, whose frailties and imperfect nature are the melancholy experience of every hour. It is curious to observe how little the great Almighty Master has depended on the higher virtues of the human character for accomplishing the great purposes of our being. What would become of the great metropolis of London, if it were to depend for the supply of

its necessaries, its comforts, and its luxuries, on the benevolent interest which every exalted mind was to take in the common weal; and if it did not depend, as it does and may safely depend, on the selfish effort of every man to better his own condition? This instance among a thousand others.

There was little in the experience of this writer to justify these delusions. "Any reason for a vote," she says, "seemed to be taken up, rather than the obvious one, that a man should vote according to the decision of his reason and his conscience. I often mentioned, this," she says, "to men in office or seeking to be so; and they received it with a smile or a laugh, which wrung my heart." The heart was here a good one and better than the head; and so is it often in these speculative politicians, who would turn men into angels and society into a paradise.

The work is every where sprinkled over with confessions of this edifying nature. "The primary mistake," she says, "is in supposing that men cannot bear to hear the truth. It has become the established method of seeking office, not only to declare a coincidence of opinion with the supposed majority on the great topics, on which the candidates will have to speak and act, while in office, but to deny or conceal or assert any thing else, which it is supposed will please the same majority. The consequence is, that the best men are not in office. The morally inferior, who succeed, use their power for selfish purposes to a sufficient extent to corrupt their constituents in their turn. "The first principles of society," she says, "in the United States are, that rulers derive their just power from the consent of the governed; and the theory is, that the best men are chosen to serve. Both these presuppose mutual faith. Let the governed once require honesty as a condition of their consent, let them once choose the best men according to their most conscientious conviction, and there will be an end of this insulting and disgusting political scepticism. Adventurers and ambitious men there will still be, but they will not taint the character of the class; better men will foster the generous mutual faith, which is now grievously wanting; and the spirit of the constitution, now *drooping* in some of its most important departments, will revive.

"I write more in hope," she adds, "than in immediate

expectation. I saw much ground for hope, but very much also for grief. Scarcely any thing that I observed in the United States caused me so much sorrow, as the contemptuous estimate of the people, entertained by those, who were bowing the knee to be permitted to serve them."

Now there is nothing here, that is not, upon the system of universal suffrage and will of the majority, as legitimate a consequence from the eternal principles of human nature, as any deduction in Euclid from his antecedent premises. It is in vain, in forming systems of government, to proceed upon any other than the supposition of our imperfect nature. Does the system work well? let it be asked. Certainly it does, may be the reply. No matter then the theory; the fact must then be, that the good and bad passions of our nature, the mean and the honourable, the selfish and the disinterested, are in some way or other (often totally unexpected), so mixed and checked and harmonized, that the result is favourable; and so arising, may be always depended upon and expected; for such is our compound and imperfect nature, and in our sublunary state, where we are to earn our bread by the sweat of our brow, such it must ever be; and no education nor human efforts, however they may improve, can ever render it essentially otherwise.

But these are groveling ideas, far below the spirit-proof mark of the times we live in. "It is too late," says an eloquent American preacher, quoted by this female writer, as I suppose, for the edification of England and of the world, "it is too late to stay the progress of free inquiry. The dams and dykes we construct, to keep back its swelling tide, are but mere resting places, from which it may break forth in renovated power and with redoubled fury; it is sweeping on: and I say, let it sweep on; the truth has nothing to fear. Next to the want to inquire, to philosophize, the age is distinguished by its tendency to democracy, and its craving for social reform. Be pleased or displeased, as we may, the age is unquestionably tending to democracy; the democratic spirit is triumphing; the millions awake; the masses appear; and every day is more and more disclosed

'The might that slumbers in a peasant's arm.'

"The voice of the awakened millions rising into new and undreamed of importance, crying out for popular institutions, comes to us in every breeze and mingles in every sound. All over the Christian world a contest is going on, not as in former times between monarchs and nobles, but between the people and their masters, between the many and the few, the privileged and the unprivileged; and victory, though here and there seeming at first view doubtful, every where inclines to the party of the many. Old distinctions are losing their value. Titles are becoming less and less able to confer dignity. Simple tastes, simple habits, simple manners, are becoming fashionable; the simple dignity of man is more and more coveted; and with the discerning it has already become more honourable to call one, simply a man, than a gentleman."

It is somewhat surprising that this eloquent preacher of America did not fortify his text, as did our own eloquent preacher, four hundred years ago, the Rev. John Ball, by the celebrated distich:—

"When Adam delved and Eve span,
Where was then the gentleman?"

These doctrines of the primitive equality of mankind are deeply engrafted, no doubt, on the human mind, and are always a ready instrument for those, who would tear up by the roots any civilized society with which they are out of humour, and would reduce men to that state of nature, from which they are supposed first to have issued. But the followers of John Ball had real grievances to complain of, and the gentlemen of those days were their tyrants and oppressors. The first rude elements of our common nature might well be appealed to, when they were so intolerably insulted and so totally disregarded; but why there should *now* be a contest going on, between "the people and their masters," between "the many and the few" seems no longer very intelligible, upon any supposition that is favourable to the good feelings or even good sense of the many; of those, who though placed low in the scale of social existence, are neither placed there, nor kept there, by those who are above them. The gentlemen of our days are not wanting in feelings of benevo-

lence to those beneath them; and never in the history of the world were such exertions made by themselves or their exemplary families to rescue the labouring classes from ignor and vice, and to extend to them the benefits of knov edg and the comforts and supports of religion. Is it expecte that they shall parcel out their estates, or break up and divi their capitals, and "cause the poor to cease from out of tl land?" or if they did, could such an effect be thus produce Far different seems the economy of an overruling Providen in our old world at least (I shall speak of America hereafter and it is by a system of mutual dependence and assistanc of reciprocal obedience and control, of diversified elevati and depression, by interchanged offices of kindness and dut and not by primitive systems of rude liberty and equalit that it has pleased the Almighty Master to call forth and t the virtues and provide for the welfare of his creatures.

Whatever may be supposed or expected of the world this American enthusiast, there seems no need that Engla at least should be passed over by the ploughshare of t republican agitator. Our lilies of the valley need not sur be cast out of the garden of society, as noxious weeds, th only disgrace and encumber it, nor need our stately plan be beaten down, but rather left to fulfil their appointed offi in our social system, rise in spreading foliage and beau and bring forth their fruit in due season.

No doubt the higher ranks have their temptations a faults as well as the lower; but these are not now the subjec before us. I have exhibited them sufficiently in my lectur on the Reign of Louis XV.; and opposite portraits cann find their place in one and the same canvass. I contend f the equal justice that is to be administered to all, and ea must in their turn receive the censure of the historian. B equal justice is not the fashion of the world.

The great philosopher of ancient times made all virtue t consist in the avoidance of extremes; the philosophers c modern times might say the same of all political wisdom. But here lies the great evil and torment of society, its besetting sin and constant danger. The statesmen and popular writers of the present world see neither the one nor the other, neither virtue nor wisdom, in any courses but those of violence and

fury; and like the vulgar, whom they lead or follow, exercise no duties of candour, forbearance, or justice, and are never satisfied, till they have gratified their bad passions of ambition or malignity, and trampled in the dust all their opponents.

On the whole, and in conclusion, it may be observed, that the British constitution can never be without its estimation, while it is considered with a proper reference to the acknowledged principles of human nature, by men of moderation and good sense. But in troublous times it is men of far other description who rush forward and prevail. This, however, must not be. The sober and discreet members of society, have been now sufficiently instructed and admonished, in all their gradations, by the revolutions of the world. At whatever expense of personal inconvenience or mental suffering, they must resist and keep down the rash and the absurd. They must do this in time and on every fitting occasion: it is their first duty and their best wisdom. Whatever may be thought of the declamatory representations of the American writer, there is still sufficient truth in his statements to show the point to which, after the popular sacrifices that have been made, the anxieties and exertions of all intelligent lovers of their country should be now directed, and directed with a vigilance, that is henceforward never to relax or slumber. The institutions of England may be gradually undermined, though not openly swept away; they may at length sink uprooted into the stream of democracy, which must be considered in a mixed government like ours, though not always a deluge, yet as a current always in action, with more or less of power, as it rolls along, to freshen and beautify the scene, or to cover it with wrecks and desolation, according to the varying circumstances of a restless world.

THE END.

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